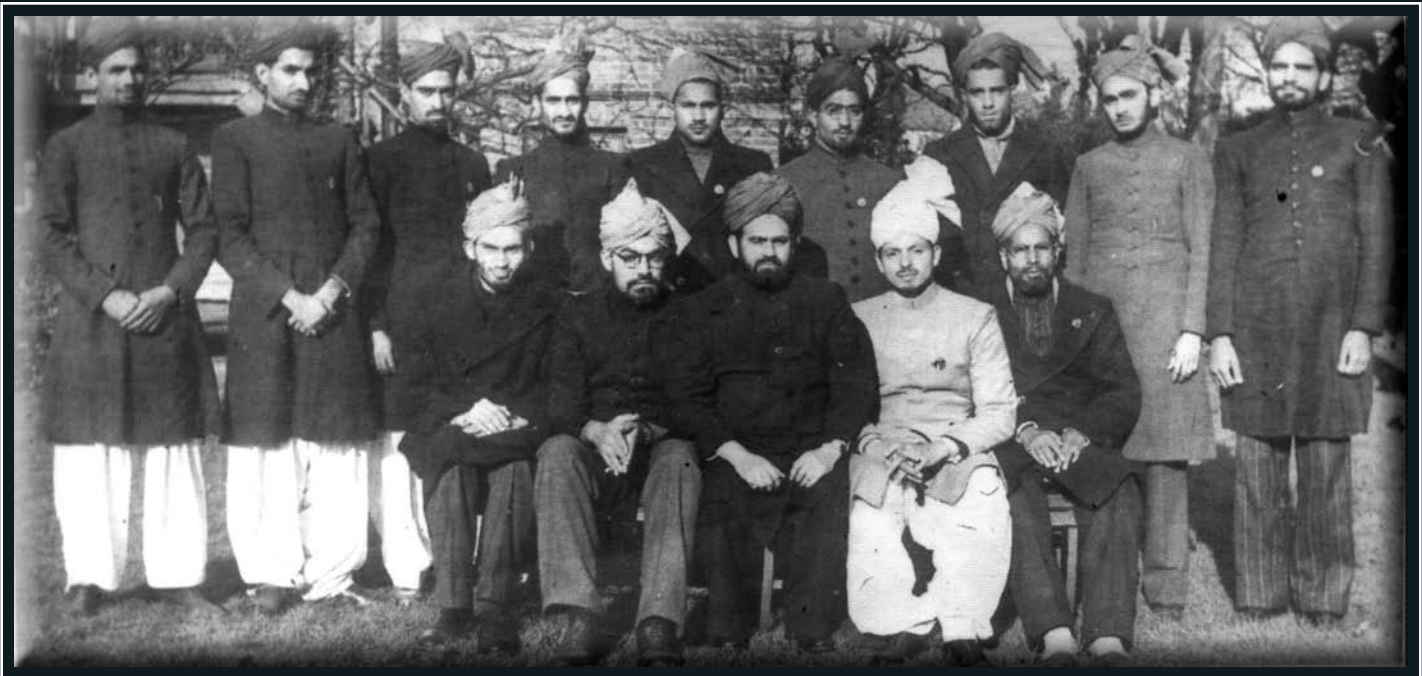
AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

July 2011

The Ahmadiyya GAZETTE USA

An informational, literary, educational, and training magazine of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA



A Historic 1947-Photograph of Missionaries,Taken in London, U.K.

Standing (Right to Left)

Ch. Allah Ditta, Syed Safirud Din, Muhammad Usman Siddique, Maulvi Karam Ilahi, Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad, Ch. Abdul Latif (Germany), Hafiz Qudratullah, Ch. Zahoor A. Bajwa, M. Ishaq Saqi

Sitting (Right to Left)

Master Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil (Italy), Malik Ataur Rahman,
Maulana Jalalud Din Shams (London), Mushtaq A. Bajwa, and Sh. Nasir Ahmad (Zurich)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2011 JAMIA ORIENTATION COURSE

for Waqfe Nau & Non-Waqfe Nau boys (12 years and older)

July 19th (Tue) – July 29th (Fri)

Al-Nasr Mosque
500 Bridge Street, Willingboro, NJ 08046

- ⇒ Classes taught by senior Jamia students
- ⇒ Daily sports activities
- ⇒ Highly rated by past year's students
- ⇒ Boarding and lodging is provided

Participation is limited to 50 students only!

Register immediately by sending the student's

- name
- age
- phone and email contact

to hammad.malik@alumni.utexas.net

For further information, call Hammad Malik at 845-418-3793 or contact your local Waqfe Nau secretary.

Hafiz Samiullah Chaudhary
National Secretary Waqfe Nau, USA

An educational and spiritual monthly publication

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM, USA

July 2011

Patron	**Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar** Ameer Jama'at USA
Editor-in-Chief	**Dr. Naseer Ahmad**
Editor	**Dr. Karimullah Zirvi**
Editorial Advisor	**Muhammad Zafrullah Hanjra**
Cover: Latif Ahmed	*Photos: Kalim Bhatti*

Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

Masjid Baitur Rehman
15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905

Phone: 301-879-0110 Fax: 301-879-0115

Editor: karimzirvi@yahoo.com
Tel. and Fax: 201-794-8122

www.ahmadiyya.us www.alislam.org

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

saw:	sallallahu alaihi wasallam (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon him)
as:	alaihissalam (Peace be upon him)
ra:	radhi allahu 'anhu (May Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	rahimahullahu ta'ala (May Allah shower mercy on him/her)
aba:	ayyada hullah ta'ala binasrihil aziz (May Allah strengthen him with His mighty help)
swt:	subhana wa ta'ala (Holy and Exalted)

The Ahmadiyya Gazette USA is published by the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc., at the local address:

Fazl-i-Umar Press
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719

Periodicals Postage Paid at Chauncey, Ohio
Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Ahmadiyya Gazette
P.O. Box 226, Chauncey, OH 45719-0226

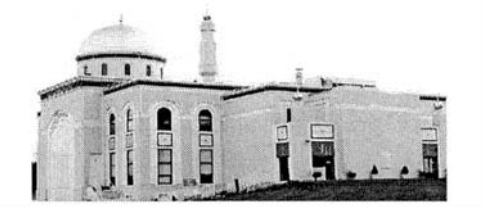


Table of Contents

2 Al-Qur'an

3 Al-Hadith

4 Sayings of the Promised Messiah[as]: Blessings of Fasting

5 Synopsis of the Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] on August 27, 2010 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

9 The Importance of Ramadan, Issues, Bounties and Blessings: Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad, Rabwah

15 Socio-Economic Aspects of Wasiyyat: Mansura Bashir Minhas, Miami, FL

17 Religious Freedom: An American Muslim Perspective: Amjad Mahmood Khan, Los Angeles, CA

23 Poem: Picture of Peace: Maha Muzaffar

24 How Can We Establish Peace Around Us: Naseer Wasim

27 Tabligh Activity: Miami Jama'at: Dr. Khalid and Mansura Minhas

28 Ahmadiyyat In Chak Mangla: Anas Ahmad Mangla, Niagra Falls, NY

30 5th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar Held at Baitur Rahman, Silver Spring, MD: Amjad Mahmood Khan

32 Harold Camping Resets the End of the World Date: Syed Sajid Ahmad, Fargo, ND

33 Majlis Sultanul Qalam USA: May 2011 Report

34 New York Jama'at Participates in the Holy Qur'an Exhibition: Shoeb Abulkalam, New York, NY

36 Interfaith Symposium on "Sanctity of the Holy Scriptures". Abdul Naseer Kakkada, St. Paul, Minnesota

37 Brief Report of a Tarbiyyat Seminar: Waseem A. Nisar, Chicago West

38 A Tribute to My Late Grandmother: Professor Rashida Tasneem Sahiba: Danial Mashud Ahmed Khan, Calgary, Canada

39 Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association: 3rd Annual Retreat: Ahsan M. Khan

41 Bookstall at Public Market: Mubarak Bashir, Rochester

42 "Muslims for Loyalty" Event Organized by Indianapolis, Indiana Jama'at: Imran Malik

45 Saint Louis Tabligh Conferences: Dr. Basiyr Rodney, St. Loiuis Tabligh Secretary

47 Op-Ed: Islam Pro Moderation: Saima Ahmad

48 Talimul Qur'an and Waqfe Ardhi Department (TaQWA)

Al-Qur'an

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۝ اَيَّامًا مَّعْدُوْدٰتٍ ط فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيْضًا
اَوْعَلٰى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَيَّامٍ اُخَرَ ط وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يُطِيْقُوْنَهٗ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ
مِسْكِيْنٍ ط فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌلَّهٗ ط وَاَنْ تَصُوْمُوْا خَيْرٌلَّكُمْ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.

The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey *shall fast* the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast *only* with great difficulty is an expiation - the feeding of a poor man. And whoso does good of his own accord it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if only you knew. (2:184-185)

COMMENTARY:

Fasting, as a religious institution, in whatever form or detail, is to be found in all faiths. "By the greater number of religions, in the lower, middle and higher cultures alike, fasting is largely prescribed; and when it is not required it is nevertheless prescribed to some extent by individuals in response to the promptings of nature" (Enc. Brit.).

It is the common experience of saints and seers that a certain degree of severance from physical relations or worldly connections is essential for spiritual advancement and has a powerful purifying effect on the mind. Islam, however, has introduced a new orientation and a new spiritual significance in this institution. According to it fasting constitutes a symbol of complete sacrifice. One who fasts not only abstains from food and drink which are the chief means of sustenance and without which one cannot live, but also from going in unto one's wife which is the means of assuring one's progeny. Thus he who fasts realy evinces his readiness, if need be, to sacrifice his all for the sake of his Lord and Creator.

Al-Hadith

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: قَالَ اللّٰهُ عزَّوَجلَّ: كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ اٰدَمَ لَه‘ اِلاَّ الصِّيَامَ فَاِنَّه‘ لِيْ وَاَنَا اَجْزِيْ بِهٖ - وَالصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ فَاِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ صَوْمِ اَحَدِكُمْ فَلاَ يَرْفُثْ وَلاَ يَصْخَبْ فَاِنْ سَابَّه‘ اَحَدٌ اَوْ قَاتَلَه‘ فَلْيَقُلْ: اِنِّيْ صَائِمٌ - وَالَّذِيْ نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهٖ لَخُلُوْفُ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ اَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ رِيْحِ الْمِسْكِ - لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ يَفْرَحُهُمَا ' اِذَا اَفْطَرَ فَرِحَ ' وَاِذَا لَقِيَ رَبَّه‘ فَرِحَ بِصَوْمِهٖ -

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "Allah, the Lord of Honor and Glory says: 'All deeds of a son of Adam are for himself, but his fasting is for Me and I shall be its reward.' The fast is a shield. When any of you is fasting he should eschew loose talk and noisy exchanges. Should anyone revile him or seek to pick a quarrel with him, he should respond with: 'I am observing a fast.' By Him in Whose Hands is the life of Muhammad, the breath of one who is fasting is purer in the sight of Allah than the fragrance of musk. One who fasts experiences two joys: He is joyful when he breaks his fast, and he is joyful by virtue of his fast when he meets his Lord. ' "

(Bukhari kitabussaum bab hal yaqul inni sa'im idha shutima)

عَنْ اَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّوْرِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهٖ فَلَيْسَ لِلّٰهِ حَاجَةٌ فِيْ اَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَه‘ وَشَرَابَه‘ -

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said: "If a person does not eschew falsehood and false conduct, Allah has no need for him to abstain from food and drink."

(Bukhari kitabussaum bab man lam yadu' qaulazzur wal'amala bih)

SAYINGS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH[AS]

Blessings of Fasting

Hadhrat Masih Mau'ood[as] states:

Once it so happened that I saw an old saintly person in my dream who by mentioning, "Fasting for sometime to receive the heavenly blessings is the *Sunnah* of the Prophets." urged me that I should follow this *Sunnah* of the family of Prophets. Thus I felt it proper to fast continuously for some time. At the same time the thought came to my mind that it will be better to perform this activity secretly. To this end I followed the following procedure:

"I started getting the food from my house in the men's section of the house and then distributed the food to certain poor and orphan children whom I had picked beforehand and had positively told them that they must come at a fixed time to see him. This way I did not eat the whole day and kept the fast. Besides God Almighty no one else knew about my fasting. After two or three weeks I realized that in such a fasting where I ate my full once in 24 hours I did not feel any discomfort and I thought that it will be better to decrease somewhat the amount of food I eat. So from then on I started to eat less and less and reached to a point that eating just one loaf of bread during the whole day and night sufficed me. So I continued to further decrease the amount of food I ate till a point reached that eating a few *tola* of food after 24 hours was sufficient for me. Perhaps for eight or nine months this was my routine. Despite this I ate so little an amount of food with which a 2-3 month old child could not survive, God Almighty protected me from all sorts of distress and hardship. With this kind of fasting the novelties which I experienced were subtle revelations which were manifested to me in those days. I met certain earlier Prophets and I also met those superior quality saints who had come in this *Ummah*. Once, while I was fully awake and conscious I saw the Holy Prophet[saw] along with Hasan[ra], Husain[ra], Ali[ra] and Fatima[ra]. This was not a dream. Rather it was a sort of wakefulness. Thus I saw many pious and saintly people, talking about whom will take a lot of time. Besides this I saw allegorically spiritual red and green colored pillars of light which were so attractive and pleasing to the heart that it is difficult to describe. I do not have power to describe them. The some of the pillars of light which were coming down from the heaven were very lustrous white and green while some of these were red. They had such a connection with the heart that by looking at them the heart felt extremely happy. There is no such pleasure in the world which the heart and spirit felt by seeing them. I think these pillars were a representation of love between God Almighty and man which was shown allegorically."

(Kitabul Bariyya, Roohani Khza'in, Vo. 13, pp 197-199, a marginal note)

Synopsis of Friday Sermon Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], on August 27, 2010 at Baitul Futuh Mosque, Morden, UK

Shermeen Butt

Hazoor[aba] gave a discourse on *Laylatul Qadr,* (the Night of Destiny) and the last ten days of *Ramadan.* Hazoor[aba] began by recitating *Surah Al-Qadr*. The translation reads:

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful
Surely, We sent it down on the Night of Destiny.
And what should make thee know what the Night of Destiny is?
The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months.
Therein descend angels and the Spirit with their Lord's decree concerning everything.
Peace – so will it be even at the rising of the dawn. (97:1-6)

Hazoor[aba] said in a few days we will enter the last ten days of *Ramadan*, during which, according to traditions, *Laylatul Qadr* falls. This is a night of particular spirituality in which God looks down on His servants in a special way. Muslims in general give a lot of significance to the last ten days of *Ramadan.* Even those who are not so attentive in the first two sets of ten days of the month try and improve their spiritual condition in the last ten days. People in our Community are also inclined to enhance their worship of God in the last ten days. *Ahadith* prove that *Laylatul Qadr* falls in the last ten days of *Ramadan* and it is a night of tremendous significance. However, can it make one a true believer and servant of God if effort is only made in the last ten days of *Ramadan* and the rest of the year is spent in disregard? God states that He created men and *Jinn* so that they may worship Him. Concentration of worship in search of a special spiritual night in the last ten days of Ramadan to make up for an entire life time's worship takes one away from this basic objective of creation.

If God so wills, He manifests His special grace for the consolation of His servant, creating a condition, by virtue of which this special night is granted. His servant experiences a wondrous spiritual state. That is, fulfilling the pledge of worship of God, in which man notices spiritual development and enhancement every moment, indeed should notice it. When man fasts while reading and reflecting on the Qur'an and primarily fasting in order to enhance his devotion to God, indeed God sees that man is putting the commandments in practice to the best of his ability, and is supplicating and calling God in view of: **'I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me.**' (2:187), not only does God listen to prayers, rather He grants *Laylatul Qadr* in accordance to His promise during which He comes down to earth, near His servants. When man fulfils his pledge, God raises man's spiritual state. If there is ever any deficiency, it is on our part, in our effort and our practices. God provides this blessed month every year with its last ten days and *Laylatul Qadr*, which is the highest point of attaining nearness to God. How much effort should then be made on man's part! The spiritual experience of this special night brings about amazing transformation in a person and so it should, otherwise the due of the night is not fulfilled. If one believes one has experienced *Laylatul Qadr*, the worship of which night is better than the worship of 1000 months, and thinks he does not need any more worship, he is misled. In fact *Lalilatul Qadr* makes one a servant of God in an enhanced manner and in such a situation Divine beneficence flows. God states that when man endeavours to gain His nearness, honors and nurtures his pledge, He listens to prayers and continues to bestow.

The Promised Messiah[as] said that *Laylatul Qadr* is a time of purification for man so that he may become compliant to all God's commandments. Hazoor[aba] said the month of *Ramadan* comes so that we may bring about such a transformation, search for *Laylatul Qadr* in the last ten days. The Holy Prophet[saw] made special effort during the last ten days of *Ramadan* and strove hard in worship of God. He would stay up at night and wake his family up. Not only did he increase his own worship in these days he could not tolerate that his family should be deprived of the immense blessings of God's grace in the last ten days. Even the duration of his worship during ordinary times as well as its beauty cannot be assessed, let alone the state of his worship in the last ten days; it is beyond our imagination. Thus was the model he established for us. May God enable us to create such an environment in our homes to facilitate our forgiveness.

The Holy Prophet[saw] said that one who fasts with fervor of belief and to gain pleasure of God, has his/her previous sins forgiven and one who wakes up for *Laylatul Qadr* with a passion of belief will have his/her previous sins forgiven. Hazoor[aba] explained that fasting in *Ramadan* is conditional that it is done to strengthen belief and gain God's pleasure, otherwise God has no interest in a person staying hungry. Observation of *Laylatul Qadr* is also conditional that it is done to gain the sincere pleasure of God and not for the fulfilment of any worldly reasons. Hazoor[aba] said God's pleasure should be foremost in our prayers.

The Holy Prophet[saw] said that *Laylatul Qadr* should be searched for in the last ten days. If one is weak and vulnerable he/she should never be overcome in the last seven nights. Hazoor[aba] explained that if for some reason one cannot avail of the blessing of *Ramadan*, every excuse should be discarded in the last ten days. In another tradition the Holy Prophet[saw] said, 'it *[Laylatul Qadr]* has been shown to some of you in the first seven nights of the last ten days and to others in the last seven nights.' Hazoor[aba] said this clarifies the earlier *Hadith* that there is no specifically appointed night, rather it can fall on any night of the last ten days. Some *Ahadith* mention looking for it in the odd nights of the last ten days.

Hazoor[aba] explained that whoever experiences *Laylatul Qadr* does so by virtue of a very special blessing of God. It is most important to value this experience and that can be by continually developing in one's spirituality. The worship of this one night is better than that of a 1000 months. Hazoor[aba] said 83 years make up 1000 months. Thus if one experiences it, one's lifetime's prayers - that are good for a believer - are accepted. All prayers made are not good in God's sight; He thus accepts what He deems good. This night also gives a believer a higher spiritual status and the descent of angels brings a revolutionary change in a believer's connection with God. And one night's worship becomes equal to a lifetime's worship. This is because one attains the objective of one's creation; for once having attained it, a believer continually strives to develop in this.

Hazoor[aba] said this night has extensive significance as explained by the Promised Messiah[as]. One significance of the Qur'anic verse '**Surely, We sent it down on the Night of Destiny**' is the revelation of the Holy Qur'an. The complete *Shariah* was revealed in the month of *Ramadan*, as the Qur'an also declares: '**The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was sent down** ...' (2:186). Not only did its revelation begin in *Ramadan*, but the angel Gabriel[as] would repeat its recitation each *Ramadan* with the Holy Prophet[saw]. It also signifies that it was the need of the time that a perfect guidance was revealed, as the Qur'an states, it was a time when: '**Corruption has appeared on land and sea...**' (30:42). The disorder that engulfed the world at the time was of an incomparable scale and it was required that a perfect Book be revealed. As the Qur'an states:

'The Praiseworthy, the Lord of Honor,
By this perspicuous Book.
Truly, We revealed it in a blessed Night.
Truly, We have *ever* been warning *against evil*
In it all wise things are decided,
***By* Our *own* command. Verily, We have ever been sending *Messengers*,**

As a mercy from thy Lord. Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing,' (44:2-7).

Hazoor[aba] said thus this clear and open Book of guidance was revealed in this blessed time and night to the perfect man who was restless for mankind to worship the One God and consider Him All Powerful, rather than make a humble mortal son of God and make his death a source of salvation. It was in acceptance of the prayers of the perfect man[saw] that this perfect *Shariah* was revealed which not only became a source of enlightenment in the dark era 1400 years ago, rather, it will continue to do so till the Day of Judgment, just as the Prophet[saw] will remain the Seal of all the Prophets and the last law-bearing Prophet. And each time, distraught by the state of the world, God's servants will supplicate to Him and implore Him, He will console them by fulfilling: '...**Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing,'.**

The Promised Messiah[as] who was the true and ardent devotee of the Prophet[saw] and was sent in his complete subordination said that an exquisite point found in *Surah Al Qadr* is that when a reformer descends from the heavens, angels descend with him and attract eager people to the truth. Thus, at a time of spiritual darkness when people are inclined towards religion, it is a sign that a reformer is about to come down from the heavens. At this time two types of actions take place. One that grants purification of the souls of the people and as a result hones their wisdom. The second action although it sharpens wisdom but the soul does not reach the truth, rather it becomes an evidence of: **'In their hearts was a disease, and Allah has increased their disease to them...'** (2:11) just as it happened in the times of all Prophets of God. When angels descend with Prophets of God each soul is stirred. Those who have a truthful nature are drawn to the truth but others who were inclined to satanic ways although they are stirred and also drawn towards religious matters but they do not turn to the truth. The effect on the good-natured is good and bad on the bad-natured. Each Prophet's era has a *Laylatul Qadr* when the Book that has been given to him is revealed. The greatest *Laylatul Qadr* was that of the Holy Prophet[saw] and the extent of his *Laylatul Qadr* reaches up to the Day of Judgment. At a time when a deputy of the Holy Prophet[saw] is about to come, hearts are stirred again. The *Laylatul Qadr* appointed for the time of the descent of this deputy is in fact a branch or a shadow of the *Laylatul Qadr* of the Holy Prophet[saw]. During this time, which will last till the Day of Judgement, and regarding which the Qur'an states: **'In it all wise things are decided'** (44:5) spiritual knowledge will be spread all over the world. It is the way of God that His word is revealed during *Laylatul Qadr* just as His Prophet comes at this time. This is also when His angels descend and people are drawn to piety. The angels start from the dark night of ignorance till the break of dawn attracting eager people to the truth.

Remarking on the beautiful writings of the Promised Messiah[as] Hazoor[aba] said if the world, especially the Muslims, understood his message, rather than oppose it, they would become his helpers. Hazoor[aba] said the reasoning given by the Promised Messiah[as] is very strong and those who wish for peace and are looking for a reformer and are awaiting the Messiah should think and reflect as the Promised Messiah[as] said that if at a time of spiritual darkness people are inclined towards religion, it is a sign that a reformer is about to come down from the heavens. At the time of his advent people were desperately waiting for someone but when he made his claim, a section of the society opposed him while some accepted him and thus accomplished their worldly life and the Hereafter. Hazoor[aba] said time and again the Muslims announce that *Khilafat* is needed to take care of the Islamic world. How can there be *Khilafat,* unless the Messiah comes? In the time of the Holy Prophet[saw] the pious-natured recognized him but people like Abu Jahl who considered himself very wise was destroyed. In the time of the Promised Messiah[as] we see the example of Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-din[ra] and Sahibzada Abdul Lateef Shaheed[ra] who in spite of hailing from far off places came to him and accepted him. Whereas Maulwi Muhammad Hussain Batalwi was close by but remained deprived. Those who do not have the capacity to accept piety are arrogant and self-centered and their wisdom also becomes negative and because of their negativity their spiritual condition deteriorates.

Hazoor[aba] said the condition of those who reject the Promised Messiah[as] in the current times is the same.

In their assumption they make pious statements but they have no effect because they are the detractors of one who has been sent by God.

Hazoor[aba] said Tahir Nadeem Sahib has been chronicling about the Arab Ahmadis in *Al-Fazl*. Writing about the events leading up to the acceptance of Tahir Hani Sahib, a life devotee who is working very hard, he relates that initially he tried every scheme to reject the message of Ahmadiyyat. He then read some books which took him to a religious scholar, who in his opinion had the capability to refute the message. However all he did was scoff at the books. Hani Sahib arranged a debate of the scholar with Mustapha Thabit Sahib in which he did not measure up. Eventually he left the scholar and God guided him to Ahmadiyyat. Hazoor[aba] said in spite of possessing religious knowledge those who reject the Promised Messiah[as] run out of reasoning. Today too, those who claim to know religion follow satanic practices. As the Promised Messiah[as] has explained the period of the *Laylatul Qadr* granted to the Holy Prophet[saw] extends till the Day of Judgment and it is through it that pious-natured are coming to the message of truth. However, the wretched are losing the way. Hazoor[aba] said this era of *Laylatul Qadr* has been re-established in his[saw] shadow because of his deputy, the Promised Messiah[as]. In the current age we can attain *Laylatul Qadr* by valuing and recognizing this *Laylatul Qadr*.

There are various categories of people those who follow religion properly, avail of Divine beneficence by virtue of pious nature or presume oneself to be the caretaker of religion and create oppression and brutality in the name of religion, similarly the use of certain inventions to trample human morals and values, while other [inventions] are beneficial to the believers and are becoming a source to spread the word of God. All these positive and negative aspects are a proof of the advent of one sent by God and *Laylatul Qadr*. It is worth noting here that God states that the descent of angels continues till **'the rising of the dawn'.** The angels have been descending from the time of the Holy Prophet[saw] when Islam was triumphant. That was the **'rising of the dawn'** which cannot and will not return. This is when religion was perfected. However, as the Promised Messiah[as] said this condition continues to manifest in the time of the 'deputy' in a shadow-like basis. This light remained for thirty years during the era of *Khilafat e Rashida*. Gradually spiritual darkness spread and was followed by complete darkness. Today, again it has re-emerged with the advent of the Promised Messiah in a shadow-like basis. This is the age following the **'rising of the dawn'** which, in a way came to an end at the passing away of the Promised Messiah[as].

In order to seek beneficence from this new day that has dawned, in order to protect the triumphs that are destined for Ahmadiyyat Islam from worldly flamboyance and to continue to raise the levels of spirituality, God reminds us of *Laylatul Qadr* each year in *Ramadan*.

In one way the era of the Holy Prophet's[saw] *Laylatul Qadr* finished at his passing away with and the revelation of the Holy Qur'an at **'the rising of the dawn'**, but in another way it will continue with the message for the *Ummah* to pay the dues of the Qur'an and *Ramadan* and reap the benefits of this very special night. By creating this recurrent spiritual ambiance, God has bestowed a huge favor. If, in appreciation of this, we discharge our obligations, we will continue to avail of the beneficence issued by the Holy Prophet[saw]. May God always confer His blessings on us. Our detractors, in their presumption, harass us and wish to see us in darkness, wish for our destruction and in their presumption hope to devastate us, but Divine communities are not wasted nor can they be destroyed. May the harassment that has been on going in Pakistan bring about an arrangement of *Laylatul Qadr* and may we see that manifestation of **'the rising of the dawn'** which manifests in the form of enduring peace and triumph.

****

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAMADAN, ISSUES, BOUNTIES AND BLESSINGS

Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad, Rabwah

Translated by: Arifa Haleem

It is good luck that once again in our life there is the arrival of the month of blessings and benevolence. Yes! the same spiritual spring season for which our master and lord Hadhrat Muhammad[saw] used to pray, "O, Allah bless our *Rajab* and *Shaban* with benevolence and take us to Ramadan lest there should be a call for us before Ramadan. Who knows which Ramadan may become a source of forgiveness." He also said this, "How unfortunate is that person who got Ramadan and was not forgiven." (Kanzau Ummal, vol.7 p.79)

Obligation of Fast

In the Holy Quran *Sura Al Baqara* verses 184-185 God Almighty has explained the commands of fasting. In the Arabic language the word *Saum* is for fast which means to stop. In religious terminology, Fast means that from *Fajr* i.e., the break of the dawn till the sunset one has to abstain from food and the special intimate relations of husband and wife provided it is with the intention of prayer.

In all the great religions of the world the word Fast is found in different forms. According to the religious history fasting became obligatory in the month of Ramadan in the second year of *Hijra Nabvi*. Before that in the Jewish fasts there was not any *Sehri* (eating food before fasting at dawn) but it was customary to observe Fasting for twenty four hours. In *Deen* it was commanded to eat *Sehri* and its time was after the mid night till the break of *Fajr*. The Holy Prophet[saw] said that the only difference between our Fast and that of the Jews is of *Sehri*. (Muslim Kitab al Saum). Actually the wisdom in the religious command is that God Almighty is pleased only with full obedience. By putting one self into hardship God cannot be pleased. So the command of *Sehri* is not only a source of comfort but it is also necessary for the remembrance of God and the blessings . By following the restrictions of the timings of *Sehr* and *Iftar* i.e. from the break of the dawn to the sun set it is liked to be late in Sehri and to be quick in *Iftari*. There is also ease in it.

Hadhrat Abu Hurraira[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "God Almighty says My most favorite persons are those who comparatively eat their *Iftari* very quickly (at the earliest allowable time).. (Tirmidhi Abwab al Saum)

In order to get the blessings of Ramadan a *Momin* should naturally wait for this month eagerly. After seeing the moon from the first of Ramadan Fasting of Ramadan should be started. The Holy Prophet[saw] said, while waiting for the moon of Ramadan start counting the days of *Sha'ban*. (Tirmidhi Abwab al Saum).

The Philosophy of Ramadan

The Holy Qur'an has explained the philosophy of Fasting in 2:184:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۝

i.e., Refrain from all the physical, moral and spiritual diseases. While explaining it, the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "Fast is like a shield to protect a man from all kinds of vices". (Tirmidhi bab al Saum).

The man who protects the fast fully and with all the conditions, performs this prayer then the same Fast becomes a shield against his spiritual enemy, Satan. This shield is in possession of the fasting person but the condition is that he should use it. Its method that is described in Tradition is to use the shield of Fast against any evil thought, vain talks or at the time of fight and say with courage and firmness that I will not indulge in this evil and I will keep myself aside from this quarrel and abuse because I am fasting. (Muslim Abwab al Siyyam)

If in this manner a man uses this shield then the fast not only protects him from worldly blood shed, physical, moral and spiritual attacks but it also becomes a Permanent shield forever. How blessed and precious is this shield if it becomes available to every one , then how

clean and clear this society will be. If this shield is not available then by Fasting one gets nothing out of it except of being hungry and thirsty. Hadhrat Abu Hurraira[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "One (a fasting person) who does not get rid of lying and wrong deeds, God Almighty does not need his abstention from eating food". Hadhrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad[ra] used to motivate wisely by saying that in every *Ramadanul Mubarak* one should promise to leave at least one bad habit. No doubt it becomes easier to leave any vice in the month of Ramadan than in the other days.

In this regard Ramadan becomes very helpful .By praying one should make this pledge more firm. The other wisdom in fasting is to awaken the feelings for the needs of the needy brothers. In case of not fasting, by feeding the destitute or paying the *Fidya* Ramadan, feelings of sympathy and mutual love increase. Sayyedna Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] says: "Indeed this is a great technique for national progress that a man should benefit others with his own belongings. All the disasters happen at that time when the individuals of any nation start feeling that their things belong only to them and the others have no right on them. The foundation of worldly system lies on this reality that the other person should utilize my things and Ramadan forms this habit". (Tafsir e kabir vol. 2 page 375-376)

There is another philosophy of Ramadan too i.e. Fasting is also a cure for the physical diseases. Hadhrat Abu Hurraira[ra] narrates that the Messenger[saw] of God Almighty said, in order to purify everything, there is *Zakat* and Fasting is the source of the body's outward and inward *Zakat* and purity. (Ibne Majah kitab al Saum)

In another Tradition it is related "*Su mu Tasbi hu*". i.e. keep on fasting and you will be healthy. (Jamia al Saghir...).

Sayyedna Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] says, "Fasts become a reason to get rid of several physical diseases. The latest research shows that the only reason for becoming old or weak is the retention of extra secretion in the body and due to this disease or death happens and Fasting is very useful for it". (Tafsir Kabir vol. 2 p. 375)

Bounties of Ramadan

In the Holy Prophet's period of time, it was the arrival of Ramadan. An evening before when it was the last date of *Sha'ban,* the Holy Prophet[saw] in order to prepare his Companions for this blessed month explained its dignity and glory. Hadhrat Salman Farsi[ra] narrated its detail like this. He said, "O people a month of great glory and dignity is going to cover you. Yes a month of blessings in which there is one night (due to its benefits and virtuous reward) that is better than thousand nights. Allah has obligated its fasts and considered its nightly remembrance of God as *Nafl* .In this month a person who tries to get nearness of God through any optional (*Nafli*) prayer, in ordinary days he will get virtuous reward of this optional prayer that is equal to seventy obligatory prayers. This is a month of patience and the reward of patience is Paradise. This is a month of sympathy and compassion and it is such a month in which the believer's provision of food is enhanced. Who so ever breaks the fast of another fasting person, this action becomes a source of forgiveness for his sins and he will be saved from fire. He gets an equal reward to the reward of the fasting person, without reducing any reward of the fasting person. This is such a month that its beginning is benevolence. Its best thing is forgiveness and its end is salvation from fire. A person who lightens the workload of his worker or servant in this month God Almighty forgives him also and gives him salvation from fire. (Baihaqi fi shob al Iman Hadith 3608).

Hadhrat Abu Hurraira[ra] narrates that the Messenger of God Almighty said when it is the first night of the month of Ramadan then the devils and the rebellious Jinn are shackled and the doors of the Hell are closed. Even not a single door remains open. The doors of Paradise are opened and not any one of them is closed. An announcer announces, "O the seeker of Goodness come and step forward and O, the seeker of evil make a stop. For the sake of God Almighty many people are saved from the fire. The same thing happens every night of Ramadan. (Tirmdhi Abwab al Saum)

By opening the doors of Paradise means the believers in the Ramadan are blessed with such a divine ability to perform the acts of piety, which takes them to the Paradise. In other words this month becomes a cause of opening the doors for Paradise. In the same way by closing the doors of Hell means that *Momins* get the favor of God Almighty by avoiding those acts that take them to Hell because the fasting person anyhow

avoids the bigger Sins and the smaller sins are just forgiven. So the real thing is to make Ramadan enter in one's own self and to obey its commands. On account of this God's doors of displeasure and Hell are closed and the doors of His pleasure and Paradise are opened for such a person and his remembrance of God Almighty is granted in a very good way.

It is in the Tradition that one Ramadan till the other Ramadan becomes a source of *Kaffara* for the sins of a man. (Kanuzul Haqaiq)

If a man with true heart and *Taqwa* observes the prayers of Ramadan then Ramadan produces such virtuous effects and good habits that become a source of *Kaffara* for the sins. While explaining the magnificence of the month of Ramadan The Promised Messiah[as] said, the magnificence of the month of Ramadan is known by "*Shahro Ramadan...*"

The Sufis wrote that this month is excellent for the illumination of mind. Revelations occur abundantly in it. Prayer *(Salat)* purifies the Self. By purifying the Self means that the carnal desires of *Nafse Ammara* should be kept at distance. By illuminations of the mind means that the door of Revelation should open, so that it could see God. (Malfoozat, Vol. 4 p 256)

Exemption for the Sick and the Traveler

After granting exemption from fasting while traveling it is instructed to complete the missed fasts in the other days of the year (2:185):

فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيْضًا اَوْعَلٰى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَيَّامٍ اُخَرَ ط

How beautifully The Promised Messiah[as] has guided in this regard. " If God Almighty wanted He would not have restricted this *Ummah* like other *Ummahs* but He has imposed these restrictions for the sake of Goodness. In my point of view the reality is that when a man with truth and utmost sincerity supplicates to God Almighty, not to deprive him of in this month, then God Almighty does not deprive him of. If in this condition a man falls sick in the month of Ramadan, then this sickness becomes a blessing for him because every action depends on intention. For the sake of God, a *Momin* should prove himself courageous by his own existence. So from my point of view it is good that man should pray to God, "O, Allah this is your lucky month and if I am deprived of it and who knows the next year I live or die or I could be able or not able to observe these missed Fasts and ask for His Divine help then I am sure that God Almighty will grant power to such a heart". (Malfoozat Vol. 4 p. 228)

Sometimes observing Fasts in sickness or missing them by pretending to be sick leads to exaggeration. There should be moderation in both ways. Sayyedna Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] says, *Shariah* has greatly emphasized on it that if extreme hardship is not allowed in it then too much ease is also not allowed. So there should neither be so much hardship that due to it one dies nor so much ease that the commands of *Shariah* are disgraced and responsibilities evaded by lame excuses. I have seen that some people by pretending to be weak do not observe fast. Likewise some people say that by fasting they feel weakness but this is also not an argument. Fasting only due to that weakness is excused about which a doctor prohibits. Tafsir Kabir vol.2 p 386)

Traditions tell us about fasting during traveling .In early times before the Fasts became Obligatory, the Messenger of God and the Companions used to observe Fasts during journey. In 8th *Hijra* the condition was the same till the conquest of Mecca.

Hadhrat Ibne Abbas[ra] narrated that during the journey of the conquest of Mecca up to *Maqame Kadeed* the Holy Prophet[saw] continued to observe Fasts and after that he did not observe them. The Companions considered only the last *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet[saw] as practicable. (Muslim Kitab al Sayyam)

After this the Holy Prophet[saw] further explained this subject by saying that it is not an act of Goodness that you observe fasts during the journey. It is necessary for you to avail of God Almighty's this benefit of exemption which He has granted you. So accept this exemption. The Holy Prophet[saw] himself used to break the Fast of the traveler. Hadhrat Umru bin Ummeyyah Zamri[ra] narrates, "After coming back from a journey I went to see him[saw]. The Holy Prophet[saw] said to wait for the meals. I said to him respectfully, Hazoor, I am observing fast. Out of love he said, come near to me and I will tell you that God Almighty has exempted the traveler from fasting

and forgiven him half of the prayer too." (Nisai kitab al Saum)

In another Tradition it is narrated that a person who has a ride that takes him to such a place where he can eat to his fill and where ever he is and in whatever condition he finds the month of Ramadan, should observe the fasts. (Abu Dawood Kitab al Saum)

In the light of Qur'anic verses, *Ahadith Nabvia,* instructions of the Promised Messiah[as] and the successive Caliphs, the Third Successor of The Promised Messiah[as] accepted the recommendation of *Majlis e Afta.*

1. The Promised Messiah[as] declared Fasting in sickness and travel as disobedience. The decision of Hazoor is based on the Qur'anic command and it is supported by the overall meaning of *Ahadith Nabviyya.* The Holy Prophet[saw] has declared disobedient those who observe fasts in Ramadan while on journey. The traditions, which show an exemption are previous to them.
2. The Promised Messiah[as] declared Qadian the second homeland for the Ahmadis who were coming from outside it. So during their stay there they can observe fasting. But they do not observe fasting (in Qadian) even then it is permissible.
3. The journey towards a second homeland is also a journey, so fasting is not permissible.

   The actions of the Promised Messiah's[as] period also support this because the Promised Messiah[as] broke the Fast of the fasting people who came to Qadian before the *Iftari* time.
4. Optional Fasting is permissible while traveling.
5. All those people whose duty is related to traveling e.g. railway guard, driver, pilot traveling agent, village messengers etc. are considered as residers and they will observe the Fasts of Ramadan. Furthermore there can be four states of fasting. The following method can be adopted for them:

1). The journey starts from home after *Sehri* and the predominant idea of its ending is before *Iftari* then fasting can be observed because in this case it is not a journey and it does not matter if such a short journey can be under taken in fasting.

2). If on foot or riding it is a continuous journey then one should not observe fasting.

3). If while traveling there is a full day stay at some place, then fasting can be observed i.e. to observe fast or not, it is allowed in both ways.

4). If at some place there is a fifteen days or more stay then *Sehri* should be arranged there and fasting be observed.

(Al -Fazl, Jan.14, 1966)

Kaffara of Breaking Fasts and *Qada* of Missed Fasts

If a sane or an adult person for whom fasting is mandatory breaks the fast without any genuine excuse, then there should be *Kaffarara* related to the sanctity of Ramadan. So for such a person a fixed *Kaffaara* is that he should free a slave or if that is not in his power then he should observe fasting continuously for two months. If his health does not allow to observe the fasts also then he should feed 60 poor people. This *Kaffara* of breaking the fast is only in this condition when a man intentionally breaks it without any excuse and compulsion .If due to any genuine excuse one has to break the fast then the *Qada* of this Fast is necessary. He should observe a fast in place of the missed one. *Kaffara* is not necessary for a traveler or a patient who cannot observe fasts in Ramadan it is appropriate for him to complete them at any time during the year till the next Ramadan ,because life is not dependable. Who knows if one becomes a creditor of Fasts in the coming Ramadan.

Hadhrat Ayesha narrates, "My fasts of Ramadan which were missed due to excuse, I used to observe them in *Sha'ban* because in these days the Holy Prophet used to observe more fasts". It is not necessary that the Fasts of *Qada* should be observed continuously but whenever one gets the ability for fasting they can also be observed intermittently. (Bukhari Kitab al Saum)

Blessings Of Ramadan

In a sacred Tradition God Almighty says that Fasting and its reward and requital are also related to My Being and its reward is boundless which only I know. So I myself without relating to anyone will bless its reward for My man. (Bukhari Kitab al Saum).

In a tradition, God Almighty

says, "One who observes fasting without any hypocrisy I become his reward". (Jamiatul Saghir.....)

By explaining the blessings of fasting the Holy Prophet[saw] said, "There is a door in paradise which is called *Riyyan*.(its meaning is big irrigator) On the Day of Judgment the fasting people will enter Paradise through it. No one else except them can enter this door. It will be announced that day, where are the fasting people? Then the fasting people will stand up and no one else except them will enter the door. When they have entered then that door will be closed." (Bukhari Kitab al Saum)

The entry of the inhabitants of Paradise through the *Bab-e-Riyyan* can be interpreted as spiritual fill i.e., as a result of the prayers of Fasting, spiritual splendors and blessings will descend on them in abundance.

Hadhrat Ibne Abbas[ra] narrated that the Holy Prophet[saw] used to be more generous in the month of Ramadan than usual and every night in Ramadan Hadhrat Gabriel used to come and see him till he died. The Holy Prophet[saw] used to read the Holy Qur'an to him.

And the other Tradition is that Hadhrat Gabriel along with the Holy Prophet[saw] used to revise the whole of the Holy Qur'an (i.e., they used to read the Holy Qur'an to one another). In those days the Holy Prophet[saw] also used to exceed in his goodness and blessings even more than the winds that bring rain. (Bukhari Kitab al Saum)

Ramadan and Prayer

With reference to the commands of Ramadan God Almighty has mentioned about His coming close to His men and granting their prayers. The condition is that by having total belief in Him they should also obey the Divine commands. *Tahajud* is the best time for the acceptance of prayers. Besides the prayers and *Nawafil* the *Iftari* time of Fasting is also the time of the acceptance of prayers. So the fast breaking time (*Iftari* time) is a very blessed one. It is in the Tradition that there are two pleasures for a fasting person. One pleasure he gets at the *Iftari* time and the other he gets when due to Fasting he will see (meet) God Almighty. (Bukhari Kitab al Saum)

In the same way the Messenger of God said, "On every *Iftari* God Almighty lets some people go free (from the fire) and this (action) happens daily in the evening" (Ibne Majah Kitabal Saum)

Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Umru Bin al Aas[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said that at the time of *Iftari* there is such a prayer that can not be rejected.(Ibne Majah Kitab al Saum)

So the blessed moments of *Iftari* time should not be wasted but at this time of the acceptance of prayer one should make supplications. What a goodness it is if after making ablution and a few minutes earlier before *Sehri* one should sit alone and supplicate for the fulfillment of ones desires. It is also proved that at the time of *Iftari* the Holy Prophet[saw] recited this excellent prayer also. (Mustadrik Hakim Kitab al Saum.)

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِيْ وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَنْ تَغْفِرَلِيْ ذُنُوْبِيْ

"O my Allah, forgive me for the sake of your mercy which encompasses universe and forgive me my sins".

Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] said, "in the same way there are timings for the acceptance of prayer but they are not under the demarcation of apparent goods. They are related to the special conditions and states of the human heart. Only that person can feel them who goes through that condition. So the month of Ramadan has a very deep relation with the acceptance of prayers. God Almighty has used the word "close" for a supplicator who supplicates in this specific month .If by being so close He can not be found then, when can He be found." (Tafsir e Kabir vol.2 p 408,409)

Ramadan and Tahajjud

Once Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] was asked how in the month of Ramadan the Holy Prophet[saw] used to pray at night. She said that the Holy Prophet[saw] in Ramadan and besides the days of Ramadan never performed more than eleven *Rakahs*. First he used to recite four *Rakahs* but do not ask about the beauty and length of these *Rakahs* i.e. I do not have words to explain the beauty of this long prayer. Then he performed four more similarly long and beautiful *Rakahs*. At the end he used to recite three *Viter* i.e. total eleven *Rakahs*. (Bukhari Kitab al Tahajjud)

The Holy Prophet[saw] specifically laid stress on the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and the supplications. In the month of Ramadan he performed *Nawafil* three times in congregation and then on the fourth day he did not come so that this prayer may not become like an obligation to the *Ummah*.Bukhari Kitab al Saum)

The First Successor of the Promised Messiah[as] by mentioning the blessings of Ramadan said, "In my view the first thing is that Fasting is commanded in the month of Ramadan. Secondly feeding the others according to one's means. Thirdly teaching of the Holy Qur'an. Fourthly to establish Ramadan i.e. to make more effort in prayer than usual. For the establishment of Ramadan, three methods were in force among the Companions. Some of them used to recite twenty *Rakah* in congregation. Some recited only eight and some used to perform *Tahajjud* prayer at home.

At this a newcomer said that the Holy Prophet's[saw] performing the *Traweeh* Prayer more than three or four days has not been confirmed. That is why some people call it *Umeri* schism. (Umeri *Biddat*) Hadhrat *Hakim al Ummat* said, "The Holy Prophet[saw] may have performed the *Traweeh* Prayer only for one day but it has become *Sunnah*. Secondly by not acting on it, *Sunnah* does not break." (Majmua Fatawa Ahmadyya p 176 *Hashia*)

The Last *Ashrah, I'tikaf* and *Lailatul Qader*

Hadhrat ibne Abbas[ra] narrates that the Holy Prophet[saw] said that one who performs *I'tikaf* he cuts himself off from the sins. On account of sitting in the mosque the deeds of Goodness which he misses even for them God Almighty blesses him with reward. (Ibne Maja Kitab al Saum)

Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] says, "When the Holy Prophet[saw] entered the last *Ashra* (The last ten days of Ramadan) he would gird up his loins and make his night alive (stayed awake) at night for the remembrance of God Almighty) and also awakened his family members. (Bukhari Kitab al I'tikaf)

After the Fajr prayer(on the twentieth day) the Holy Prophet[saw] used to go to his tent of *Aitkaf*. (Abu Dawood Kitab Al Saum)

There is another Tradition of Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] that during the last *Ashra* of Ramadan the Holy Prophet[saw] would strive hard; make a great deal of effort and struggle so much that this struggle in the remembrance of God Almighty had never been seen before except these days. (Ibne Maja Kitab al-Saum)

In the same way she says, "This is the *Sunnah* for the *I'tikaf* doer that neither he should visit a patient, attend a funeral, establish intimate relations (of touching her) with his wife nor he should go out to do anything except by compulsion. *I'tikaf* with fasting should be performed in the *Jami'a* Mosque". (Abu Dawood Kitab al Saum)

Moreover she said that during the days of *I'tikaf* the Holy Prophet never used to enter the house without any needs of necessity. (Bukhari Kitab al *I'tikaf*)

In the last *Ashra* the Holy Prophet used to perform *I'tikaf* and in search of *Laila tul Qadr* made the nights also alive. Another blessing of this last *Ashra* of *Ramadanul Mubarak* that he described is "In the last night of Ramadan my *Ummah* is forgiven". He was asked, "O, Messenger of God does *Lailatul Qadr* fall upon the last night of Ramadan"? He said, "No, but when the doer finishes his doing then at that time he is rewarded." (And this forgiveness is his reward)- (Musnad Ahmad vol.2 p.292)

Moreover he said a person who with full faith and with the intention of reward gets the divine favor to remember God Almighty in *Lailatul Qadr*, his sins are forgiven. (Bukhari kitab al Saum)

Once Hadhrat Ayesha[ra] humbly said, "O, Messenger[saw] of God Almighty if I come to know which night is *Lailatul Qadr* then what should I pray." The Holy Prophet[saw] said, "Pray this:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ

(Tirmidhi, Ibne Maja Kitabal Saum)

Translation:-O Allah You are surely a Great Forgiver and Most Exalted. You like forgiveness, so forgive me.

To be deprived of the *Mujahida* of Ramadan and this blessed night is a big deprivation. Once on the occasion of Ramadan, the Holy Prophet[saw] said to his Companions, "This month has approached you and there is such a night in it that is better than a thousand months. A person who could not avail of its benefit, he is deprived of all the Goodness."

No one else remains empty handed of this goodness and blessing except the deprived person. May God grant us the divine ability to be benefited from the blessings of Ramadan. *Ameen.*

SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECT OF WASIYYAT

Mansura Bashir Minhas, Miami, FL

Enrollment in the system of *Wasiyyat* starts with a simple act - a written pledge after reading the conditions of *Wasiyyat* stipulated by the Promised Messiah[as] in the booklet, *Al-Wasiyyat*. However, this step undeniably becomes a life-changer for those who move towards this undertaking. The mere act of signing the form is akin to surrendering to the will of Allah. It is a manifestation of a person's love for Allah. On the surface, this might appear to be a clichéd statement; however its practical ramifications are plentiful for all *Moosis.*

Wasiyyat is a perfect tool for enhancing the righteousness of man. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَ مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۙ

".....and spend out of what We have provided for them". (2:4)

This verse reiterates that the last stage for the spiritual well-being of man requires sacrifice of *'Rizq'* , which means anything bestowed by God on man, whether material or otherwise. Thus, the underlying spirit of *Wasiyyat* is not new, and material sacrifices have always been enjoined upon true believers.

Wasiyyat is an unconditional surrender to Allah's will; Allah showers its adherents with abundant Grace and Mercy and their lives are transformed. Human lives are bound to be riddled with uncertainty, trials and upheavals. *Wasiyyat* helps foster a sense of strength and fortitude, as it helps the *Moosis* reconcile with the Will of Allah and eases the passage of life. They have the solace that this world is transient in nature and all that matters is winning Allah's pleasure. To draw a parallel, *Wasiyyat* is a sort of down-payment to secure a spot in that ultimate destination, where we will all inevitably land one day. *Wasiyyat* fosters discipline in those who choose to partake in this scheme. When a large number of participants contribute to the scheme in a consistent manner ($1/10^{th}$ or $1/3^{rd}$), its cumulative benefit far exceeds the magnanimous contributions of a few; case in point being the tremendous charitable contributions by humanitarians worldwide. These philanthropists might be contributing billions, however since their donations are unpredictable and random in nature, lacking a consistent pattern, they cannot be relied upon to bring about a substantial change in the status quo and improve the overall conditions of a community. *Wasiyyat* is the perfect tool for attaining a huge pool of contributions (which might be small), but due to their consistency and the wider participation of a community, are instrumental in bringing about a constructive and long-term change, which has lasting benefits for society as a whole.

Some might argue that members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community already pay *Chanda,* thus the benefits of *Wasiyyat* appear to be overstated. It is imperative to understand that *Wasiyyat* takes the obligatory *Chanda* contributions to a higher level. It expects a person to enhance the contributions to a greater level. Those who commit to 1/3rd *Wasiyyat* (by contributing such a substantial portion of their wealth and income) carry their sacrifices to an advanced level. In the process, they are not giving up the bounties of this world. They are merely enhancing their offerings to Allah, which ultimately signifies the meaninglessness and irrelevance of this world's bounties compared to that higher goal- to win the pleasure of Allah.

Personal transformation is a constant process. Merely entering the system of *Wasiyyat* does not automatically ensure its participants an elevated status. Financial contributions are just one aspect of *Wasiyyat.* Unless they are coupled with an utmost desire to improve one's morals, one cannot do justice to the essence of this blessed scheme. It pitches one against that highest moral bar. The pledge of *Wasiyyat* is a constant reminder and an ideal opportunity to manifest our love for Allah, by striving to improve our moral and spiritual state constantly. This is no easy undertaking, as human nature is susceptible to falter. However, *Wasiyyat* serves as a guide post that allows one to regain balance despite faltering. Enrolling in the scheme of *Wasiyyat* is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate the true love for Allah. It helps in realizing and fulfilling the core purpose of life and guides our actions in that direction. It inevitably liberates us from this mundane existence and gears us towards an elevated purpose – to submit to the will of Allah. A recent Fidelity Investments survey

points out that *"4 out of 10 American millionaires do not feel rich. Many said that they would need to have at least $7.5 million in order to truly feel wealthy"*. It is quite obvious that once they achieve the $7.5 million mark, they would likely desire more material wealth. This survey depicts the lack of contentment and peace among the wealthy. It shows how greed can lead to dissatisfaction. Allah wishes to curb this greed in true believers, thus He guides them towards a greater goal. Sharing wealth provides lasting satisfaction and channels wealth towards greater and enhanced goals in life.

Wasiyyat is the perfect means for keeping unhealthy pursuits of materialistic endeavors in check. *Wasiyyat* cuts at the roots of greed and the maddening chase to acquire worldly wealth. It doesn't however completely eliminate the healthy and normal yearnings for affluence. It is crucial in imparting a perspective in life, that aspiring for prosperity is a normal desire; it lends a greater goal and lofty purpose for the use of material wealth by channeling it in the most fruitful direction. Islam never undermines the entrepreneurial spirit of man. It encourages enterprise and allows a person to realize his potential and make the best use of his acumen and excel in worldly pursuits.

Wasiyyat facilitates the equitable distribution of wealth and allows *Moosis* to contribute their share for the welfare of society. Social responsibility is fostered, and those who contribute have an increasing sense of responsibility towards the lesser privileged and increased empathy for the less fortunate is instilled. In order for a society to prosper and flourish, wealth and resources must be shared, otherwise it becomes dysfunctional. Societies that are driven by greed and neglect the under-privileged are ultimately riddled with social and moral predicaments that eventually disrupt its normal functioning. A society becomes unbalanced if income distribution is skewed.

The United States is burdened with economic woes which are exacerbated by the ever increasing disparities in incomes. The top 20% control 80 % of the wealth, and this comes as no surprise as the US economy is primarily driven by a capitalist economic system where mass accumulation of wealth is possible, and the unbridled aspirations of the wealthy class creates deep rifts in the society. Due to the lack of a system of checks and balances, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting even poorer. The state of Wisconsin recently attempted to curb the collective bargaining rights of Unions. How ironic that big business is allowed to amass fortunes, as they continue to neglect the labor class and try the utmost to curtail their share. Greed lies at the core of the major economic woes that afflict the country. Financial crisis of 2008, current health care crisis, housing bubble etc. are all triggered by greed.

Some people might hesitate to join the scheme of *Wasiyyat* due to concerns of economic hardship in already struggling times. However, the examples of the earliest *Moosis* can serve as a beacon light. They were people of meager means, however they came forward and sacrificed whatever little they had. In the long run, their generations have been the recipients of unparalleled blessings in both the worldly and spiritual realms.

In 2005, Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] reiterated the importance of *Wasiyyat* and urged *Jama'at* members to increase participation in this Divine scheme. *Alhamdulillah*, *Jama'at* members paid heed to the call of Hazoor[aba] and since then, in just a matter of 5 years, the enrollment in *Wasiyyat* has more than doubled.

An interesting facet of the new enrollments of *Wasiyyat* is that they are dominated by young members, who are joining in far greater numbers than any other groups. The astounding display of love and commitment of the younger generation is admirable. These youth are the torchbearers of the *Jama'at* and their exemplary zeal and passion will surely bear fruits in the long run. Such amazing dedication cannot be dismissed as mere idealism. These young ones are indeed setting themselves on that elevated path that will guarantee them spiritual rewards and Insha'Allah their worldly gains will not be compromised; rather they will be enhanced as the blessings of their commitment bear fruit. This amazing trend demonstrates the passion of young Ahmadi Muslims; that they are willing to commit and sacrifice at a time when their futures appear uncertain. This unwavering faith and steadfastness to *Jama'at* holds the key to their future successes in all spheres of life.

May Allah enable all *Moosis* to remain steadfast to their pledge and allow them to enhance their sacrifices. May Allah enable more Ahmadi Muslims to join this blessed scheme in accordance with the wishes of Hazoor[aba]. *Ameen.*

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: AN AMERICAN MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

Lecture Delivered at State University of New York - Buffalo on April 21, 2011

Amjad Mahmood Khan, Los Angeles, California

Thank you very much for that introduction. I am truly honored and privileged to be here this evening at SUNY-Buffalo.

It wasn't very long ago when I sat in the shoes of many of you – soaking up knowledge in college and law school eager to make my way in the world. As the son of Pakistani immigrants, I grew up thirty miles east of Los Angeles in a middle class suburban neighborhood. I had little connection with Pakistan other than the fact that I spoke Urdu – the native language there – and had dozens of uncles, aunts and cousins who lived there, most of whom I had never met or knew very little about. The fact that I looked different or that I spoke a second language or that I had a mother who wore a headscarf when she picked me up from school or that I took off time from school early every Friday to go to a Mosque for prayers – none of these really affected my day to day interactions with my friend and classmates. I liked Nintendo, the Lakers and Casio watches – and these facts alone made me resemble pretty much all children growing up in L.A. in the early 1990s. Yes – there were the occasional awkward or confusing moments – like walking around in my school's Halloween parade without a costume on, or opting out of singing Christmas carols at the school assemblies or letting my friends hunt for Easter eggs while I stayed back doing my math homework. But those moments were few and fleeting. Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that the public schools I attended were large and diverse – I remember my closest friends growing up were two Nigerian-American twins, a Filipino-American, a Mexican-American and two Caucasian-Americans. I graduated high school with almost 1,000 other seniors.

It wasn't until I attended college when I first began to face stark reminders of my Muslim identity. I attended a small, private liberal arts college in southern California, in which I was probably the only Muslim in my entire graduating class. Whether by choice or by necessity, I felt obligated to defend my religion and religious practices. And I did so as a student of American history and government. I spent the large part of my college career studying and analyzing what it meant to be an American Muslim, and what were the root causes of extreme elements within the faith I grew up with and cherished. My research culminated in my senior thesis, which I entitled, "Fighting Islamic Extremism" – a defense of moderate Islam and how to combat militants who would pervert Islam to nefarious ends. It was April of 2001, and I remember defending my thesis to a body of college professors. I distinctly remember one professor asking me: "This is all very fascinating, but are extremists in Islam a true threat to America?" I offered up an impassioned answer, but also felt that perhaps my thesis was the stuff of conspiracy theories.

Five months later, I found myself a first year law student at Harvard. It was early September of 2001. I had just taken the United Airlines flight from LAX to Logan Airport, and I was gearing up for classes. One week into law school, I remember sitting in now Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan's civil procedure class and finding out that terrorists had driven planes into the twin towers in New York. My first reaction, like so many of us who witnessed the events of 9/11, was one of horror and disgust. But I also remember asking myself: "What if I had taken the United Airlines flight from Boston to L.A. — the same flight that I was scheduled to take in a few months?" "How could the terrorists do this in the name of Islam?" And I also remember thinking about

my college professor who had asked me whether extremists in Islam were a true threat to America. Well, he now had his answer.

Why do I narrate this story? Well, my story of growing up as an American Muslim child in L.A. is no different than the stories of hundreds of thousands of second generation American Muslims all over this country. It is a story not so much of assimilation, but of reconciliation. It is a story not of perpetually clashing cultures, but of different cultures that do, on occasion, clash. And like many millions of American Muslims, the events of 9/11 changed my life – not simply because it forced me to confront and defend my American Muslim identity, but also because it motivated me to think about and convey to others what it is that I love about America.

So, I approach my talk today on religious freedom not simply as an academic hoping to share some knowledge, but also as an American Muslim lawyer who has spent the good part of his life coming to terms with my faith and citizenship.

Let me now turn to the subject at hand – religious freedom. I wanted to begin with a claim: *it has never been a better time for American Muslims to be more proud of the country they live in.* Now the skeptics in the audience may be wondering how my claim can possibly be true. With America mired in three wars with Muslim majority nations (Iraq, Afghanistan and now Libya), and recent Gallup polls showing an unprecedented level of discrimination against American Muslims, it can't be easy for American Muslims to be proud of their present predicament. Some may point to the recent mosque controversies in New York and Tennessee as examples of American Muslims facing a steep battle in countering stereotypes of their faith and practice. Some may even point to the passage of a recent Oklahoma state referendum that forbids courts from considering or relying on Islamic *Shariah* law – an issue that has stoked fear among many Americans about Islam and Muslims.

While all of this is true, the current predicament of American Muslims must be understood in its proper context. Consider for a moment the state of religious freedom for European Muslims over the past year.

In 2009, 57.5% of all voters in Switzerland supported a constitutional amendment banning the construction of any new minarets (an Islam symbol found on the top of mosques).

Last June in the Netherlands, the anti-Islam Freedom Party of MP Geert Wilders won 23 seats in Parliament. Wilders has publicly demanded that the Qur'an be outlawed and that Muslim women who wear head scarves be taxed.

Just ten days ago, France formally banned the wearing of the full veil in public places after the French national assembly and senate approved the ban by nearly unanimous margins and France's highest court upheld the veil ban as constitutional. Support for a ban on the *burqa* is now widespread across Europe, with strong majority votes in Spain, Britain and Germany.

For American Muslims, these European headlines can come as a bit of a shock. Compared to European Muslims, American Muslims appear to be progressing much better.

U.S. President Barack Obama recognized this very fact in a 2009 speech to the Muslim world in Cairo. He said:

"Freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one's religion. That is why there is a mosque in every state of our union, and over 1,200 mosques within our borders. That is why the U.S. government has gone to court to protect the right of women and girls to wear the hijab, and to punish those who would deny it."

No state in America has laws that ban minarets, headscarves, or any other kind of Islamic custom or practice of the kind Switzerland, France, and other European nations seek to implement. In 2004, Oklahoma passed a law seeking to ban the wearing of headscarves in public schools, but a federal court quickly struck down the law as unconstitutional. This past April, Oregon ended an 87-year-old ban on teachers wearing headscarves in schools. Last October, the Department of Justice filed a legal brief in support of the organizers of the new mosque in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, defending their right to practice Islam under the First Amendment. And last November, a federal judge in Oklahoma blocked enforcement of the state referendum that would ban courts from citing and relying on Islamic *Shariah* law.

So, despite the amplification of anti-Islamic rhetoric in this country, it would appear that American Muslims can exercise their faith more

freely than any other Muslim community in the world.

I wanted to spend the balance of my talk explaining why this is true – why is that American Muslims can exercise their faith more freely than any other Muslim community in the world? To this end, I breakdown my analysis into three parts: first, I will discuss briefly the origins and history of religious freedom in America; second, I will discuss the concept of religious freedom as a matter of Islamic theology and practice; and third, I will discuss briefly how much of the Islamic world has thwarted the true concept of religious freedom in Islam in profound and tragic ways. Finally, I will offer a few parting thoughts about what American Muslims might do to champion the cause of religious freedom in America and the Islamic world.

Let me begin with a brief U.S. history lesson.

America's early founding reflects a deep commitment to religious freedom. Most of the European settlers who came to North America in the Seventeenth Century fled Europe to seek religious freedom. The early immigrants to America – the Puritans – sought desperately to practice their own brand of Christianity. They founded Massachusetts as the "new Israel" – a new commonwealth based on a covenant between God and his people.

But the Puritanical vision of a "holy society" was quickly met with resistance. The first and most famous dissenter, Roger Williams, himself a Puritan minister, disagreed with the state interfering with religion. He put forth the first American case for freedom of conscience for all. He founded Rhode Island – the first American colony to grant the freedom of conscience to people of all faiths.

The Rhode Island experiment slowly grew strength and momentum in the rest of early America. For example, William Penn, a Quaker, famously founded the colony of Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century as a "holy experiment" to preserve religious liberty for all.

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence established America as a nation and declared emphatically the principle of equality for all people. But even the Declaration of Independence didn't explicitly refer to religious liberty or religious tolerance.

For the next eleven years, America's founding fathers wrestled with the idea of religious liberty and its inclusion in the U.S. Constitution. James Madison, in particular, set forth a powerful defense of religious freedom as an inalienable right. His ideas formed the basis for the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1791.

During these early years when the idea of religious freedom was taking shape in our Constitution, Muslims numbering in the thousands lived and worked in America. Most of them were imported as slaves from areas of Africa where Islam flourished. America's founding fathers were keenly aware of the relationship of Islam to America.

In his seminal *Letter on Toleration*, John Locke insisted that Muslims be tolerated in England. Campaigning for religious freedom in Virginia, Thomas Jefferson followed Locke in demanding recognition of the religious rights of Muslims. Richard Henry Lee, Jefferson's ally, declared: "True freedom embraces Muslims."

"George Washington, our country's first president, declared that he would "welcome Muslims to Mount Vernon if they were good workmen." Benjamin Rush, the Pennsylvania signer of the Declaration of Independence and friend of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, lauded Islam, asserting that he had "rather see the opinions of Mohammed inculcated upon our youth than see them grow up wholly devoid of a system of religious principles."

And the favorable sentiments of our founding founders towards Muslims carried to the general citizenry. For example, on November 14, 1785, the citizens of Chesterfield County Virginia signed an unprecedented and path-breaking petition for religious freedom, which they submitted to the Virginia State Assembly. The Library of Congress has preserved this petition in its archives and it reads:

"Let Jews, [Muslims] and Christians of every denomination enjoy religious liberty... ... It is men's labour in our Manufactories, their services by sea and land that aggrandize our Country and not their creeds. Chain your citizens to the state by their Interest. Let Jews, [Muslims], and Christians of every denomination find their advantage in living under your laws."

Historian James H. Hutson, who is the chief of the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, summarized the connection of America's early commitment to religious freedom and Islam in the following terms:

"The Founders of this nation explicitly included Islam in their vision of the future of the republic. Freedom of religion, as they conceived it, encompassed [Islam]. Adherents of [Islam] were, with some exceptions, regarded as men and women who would make law-abiding, productive citizens. Far from fearing Islam, the Founders would have incorporated it into the fabric of American life."

Religious freedom for all people, including Muslims, was therefore an indispensable component of our Constitution.

The first words of the Bill of Rights consist of the two religion clauses of the First Amendment: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."* Taken together, these two clauses safeguard religious liberty by protecting religious beliefs from government interference or control. 220 years later, despite controversies and court challenges, the religion clauses of the First Amendment remain intact and continue to safeguard religious beliefs from government interference or unlawful restrictions.

The concept of religious freedom in America has a rich history. But the essential ingredients of this concept are definitely not new. They are inspired in large part by the famous political writings of Locke and Jean-Jacque Rousseau. And interestingly enough, they strongly resonate with the Islamic concept of religious freedom. In fact, Islam advanced the concept of religious freedom over 1,000 years before America was founded.

Let me now turn to the Islamic concept of religious freedom.

The starting point for this analysis must begin with the following verse of the Qur'an:

"There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, the right way has become distinct from error." (2:257).

Among all other revealed texts, only the Qur'an stresses religious freedom in such unambiguous terms. In Islam, compulsion is incompatible with religion. Faith is an individual concern and commitment; it is a voluntary act born out of conviction and freedom. Believing Muslims should not compel another to believe in Islam because they have earned no such right. All people must be permitted to find the truth through their own path.

Elsewhere, in Chapter 10, Verse 100 of the Qur'an, we read:

"And if your Lord had enforced His will, surely, all who are on the earth would have believed together. Will you, then, force men to become believers?"

This verse demonstrates that religious freedom is part of God's design in Islam. Indeed, God admonishes Muslims not to use force in matters of faith. Forced faith is no faith at all.

Finally, an entire chapter of the Qur'an, *Surah Al-Kafirun* (Chapter 109), specifies the prescribed conduct of Muslims with non-believers. God demands that believers declare emphatically that they will not force another to believe: *"For you your religion, for me my religion."* Again, this is a strong and unambiguous proof of religious tolerance in Islam.

These Qur'anic verses are not just theoretical pronouncements. They form the basis for true Islamic governance and protection of religious freedom. Indeed, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad[saw], cherished these Qur'anic pronouncements and practically enforced them throughout his life.

Prophet Muhammad[saw] actively promoted peace, tolerance and compassion for all non-Muslim minorities living in Arabia. He did not simply demand religious tolerance of his followers; his *sunnah* (or example) was to provide legal and constitutional protections for religious minorities.

This is perhaps best illustrated by two historic documents prepared by Prophet Muhammad[saw].

The first document is the Charter of Media written in 622 A.D. – a formal agreement between Prophet Muhammad[saw] and all of the significant tribes and families of Medina, including Muslims, Jews and non-Muslim Arabs. Many scholars refer to this document as the first ever written constitution of a nation-state. The Charter of Medina pre-dated the English Magna Carta by almost six centuries. It was executed and implemented for 10 years (622-632 A.D.) and applied to 10,000 citizens living in Medina at that time. Remarkably 45% of the total population in Medina consisted of non-Muslim Arabs, 40% consisted of Jews, and only 15% consisted of Muslims. These numbers were recorded by Prophet Muhammad[saw] himself through a census that

he commissioned. In others words, Prophet Muhammad[saw] penned the Charter of Medina as a minority sovereign. His express goal was to govern a multi-religious pluralistic society.

The Charter consists of 47 clauses which set forth the formation of a sovereign nation-state with a common citizenship for all communities. The Charter protects fundamental human rights for all citizens, including equality, cooperation, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Clause 25 specifically states that Jews and non-Muslim Arabs are entitled to practice their own faith without any restrictions. In short, the Charter of Medina was the first document in history to establish religious freedom as a fundamental constitutional right.

But the Prophet Muhammad's[saw] commitment to religious freedom did not just stop with the Charter of Medina.

With Islam's rising influence in Arabia by 626 A.D., Jewish and Christian tribes endured severe struggles with certain Muslim forces near Medina. Prophet Muhammad[saw] sent a series of letters to various kings and public officials surrounding the Arab peninsula declaring his intention for peace and cooperation. One such letter was written to the monks of the St. Catherine Monastery of Mt. Sinai in 628 A.D. and known today as the "Charter of Privileges."

The letter reads:

"This is a message from Muhammad, son of Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian it married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation of (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world)."

Western Islamic scholar, Marmaduke Pickthall, comments on this letter as follows:

"The Charter which Muhammad (sa) granted to the Christian monks of Sinai is a living document. If you read it, you will see that it breathes not only goodwill, but also actual love. He gave to the Jews of Medina, so long as they were faithful to him, precisely the same treatment as to any Muslims. He never was aggressive against any man or class of men . . . The story of his reception of Christian and Zoroastrian visitors is on record. There is not a trace of religious intolerance in any of this."

The St. Catherine Monastery at Mt. Sinai, which is now in present day Egypt, has been designated by UNESCO as a "World Heritage Site" and is considered to be the oldest active Christian monastery in the world. In fact, the official website of the St. Catherine Monastery at Mt. Sinai proudly commemorates Prophet Muhammad's[saw] letter of protection. The original version of the letter can be found at the royal treasury in Constantinople in Turkey. A copy is preserved on display at Mt. Sinai. To this date, the St. Catherine monks continue to practice their faith without restriction based on the protections granted to them by the Prophet Muhammad[saw] over 1,400 years ago.

America and Islam share a remarkably similar approach to religious freedom. It is an approach grounded in absolute freedom of conscience and belief, the free exercise of religion for all people, freedom from state control of religion and mutual respect, cooperation and peace.

Let me now turn to part three of my remarks. It is a tragic irony that some parts of the Islamic world has lost sight of Islam's true and essential teachings concerning religious freedom and have failed to heed the examples of the Prophet Muhammad[saw]. Countries such as Indonesia, Egypt and Pakistan all currently have laws that suffocate the rights of religious minorities.

For purposes of illustration, I wanted to focus my attention on Pakistan since it has garnered the most

attention as of late with the recent assassinations of Salman Taseer (Governor of Punjab) and Shahbaz Bhatti (Minority Affairs Minister) and the case of Asia Bibi – a Christian and first woman to be sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan.

Pakistan uses its Criminal Code to prohibit and punish blasphemy. Blasphemy in Pakistan broadly refers to any spoken or written representation that directly or indirectly outrages the religious sentiments of Muslims. Five of Pakistan's current penal code provisions punish blasphemy. These are collectively referred to as the "anti-blasphemy" laws. Over the course of 25 years, approximately 1,000 individuals have been arrested under the anti-blasphemy laws. These individuals were Muslims (Sunnis, Shias and Ahmadis), Christians and Hindus. Their crimes ranged from wearing an Islamic slogan on a t-shirt to planning to build a Mosque to distributing Islamic literature in a public square to offering prayers in a Mosque to printing a wedding invitation card with Qur'anic verses to sending a text message perceived as critical of Islam. In case of Asia Bibi, her alleged crime was offending a group of Muslim agricultural workers by bringing them drinking water. Their punishments ranged from fines to indefinite detention to life imprisonment to the death sentence. Although no one to date has been executed for blasphemy, at least 32 individuals have been killed by mobs after being arrested for blasphemy. One Roman Catholic bishop committed suicide outside of a Pakistani courtroom to protest the death sentence of a Christian arrested for blasphemy.

Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws continue in full force and effect today. They incite religious extremism and silence the opinions of both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities. The U.S. State Department's recent report on Pakistan points out how "authorities routinely used the [anti]-blasphemy laws to harass religious minorities and vulnerable Muslims and to settle personal scores or business rivalries." Amnesty International reports that Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws are "a handy tool to silence debate and dissent." Human Rights Watch reports that "Pakistan's continued use of its blasphemy laws against religious minorities is disgraceful" and must be "repealed." The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in a recent letter to President Obama, described the anti-blasphemy laws as "restricting religious freedom" and fostering "vigilante violence."

Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community account for almost 40% of all arrests under Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws. And the situation grows dire each passing day. For example, in 2009, four Ahmadi school children in the Layyah District were formally charged with blasphemy for allegedly writing the name of Muhammad on the walls of a Mosque's toilet. The children (the youngest 14 years old) remained behind bars without bail for six months. They continue to face blasphemy charges today and can be subject to life imprisonment or death. According to BBC, the charges these children face were purely fabricated. Cases like this are not uncommon in Pakistan. In prior years, elderly Ahmadi women, Ahmadi mothers and even Ahmadi babies have fallen victim to the anti-blasphemy laws.

The persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan goes beyond individual arrests. Under the guise of the anti-blasphemy laws, Pakistani authorities have demolished, set on fire, forcibly occupied, sealed or barred the construction of over 90 Ahmadi Mosques. They have also denied the cemetery burial of 41 Ahmadis and have exhumed after burial the bodies of 28 Ahmadis. Finally, through a series of political maneuvers, they have also denied Ahmadis the right to vote in Pakistan.

The blasphemy regime in Pakistan has also fueled sectarian violence against religious minorities in Pakistan. On May 28, 2010, the Pakistani Taliban massacred 86 members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and injured hundreds more. But this wasn't a random act of religious violence in Pakistan. This was a direct byproduct of decades of state-sponsored institutionalized persecution of religious minorities. Subsequent to the May 28, 2010 attacks on Ahmadis, the same Pakistani Taliban group killed scores of Sufis and Shias in targeted attacks.

Pakistan is the only Muslim country to explicitly define who is or who is not a "Muslim" for purposes of the law. It is the only Muslim country to have a constitutional amendment that denies the right of a minority Muslim community to call itself "Muslim." It is the only Muslim country to criminalize fundamental religious practices by punishment of death. It is the only Muslim country to require its passport applicants

to declare a minority community to be non-Muslim.

It is hard to imagine that the Prophet Muhammad[saw] would have condoned this present state of affairs. He spent his life in vigorous defense of the oppressed, the orphans and the minorities; he gave refuge to a Christian delegation from Najran at his own mosque in Medina; he championed the constitutional rights of Jews and non-Muslim Arabs; and he said that differences of opinion are a blessing for society.

I wanted to close with a few personal observations. In my estimation, American Muslims have a special obligation to champion the cause of religious freedom at home and abroad. They must rescue their faith from the clutches of militancy by vocally condemning religious intolerance. If you think about it, our constitution, the U.S. Constitution, is in many ways more "Islamic" at its core than the constitutions of many Islamic countries. American Muslims should make special efforts to educate their fellow citizens about how vital the First Amendment's religious clauses are to the sanctity of our democracy. And American Muslims can do so by scrutinizing and condemning institutionalized acts of religious intolerance in the Islamic world – not as Westerners bent on imposing an agenda on other countries, but as Muslims who understand the theoretical underpinnings of religious freedom in Islam, who strive to emulate the noble examples of Islam's founder, Muhammad, and who care deeply about the future of the Islamic world. Indeed, fighting for religious freedom is a major step towards strengthening the bridge between America and Islam

Picture of Peace

Maha Muzaffar

(Read at Muslims for Loyalty Conference, Indianapolis, Indiana)

The pain we all have suffered, the endless flow of tears,
After all the work we go through to let peace come here,
Why can't we all stay here with kindness and share?,
The bombs, the attacks, the hatred is it really fair?
The word Islam means peace, is that really showing?
Some Muslims being violent in America, poison of hatred is flowing
It has come the time to stop this, it's just not right!
Muslims should be loyal to their country, don't fight!
Every day it happens our reputation is tainted,
Muslims for loyalty that is a picture yet to be painted,
Today we have come here, as one
Talking, Hoping, Dreaming,
Soon it will all be done,
I am glad I'm in the Ahmadiyya community,
Where jihad, killing, bombing exits no more,
But still, there is so much more work to do,
I want to work on making peace,
Our logo is love for all hatred for none,
I wish the worlds different colors could blend on a fleece,
No more battles! Just happiness, love, and fun,
Together we can built it, even though we are small in number,
True Muslim's love is strong,
When all the hatred has finally fainted,
Love, peace, and joy the picture is finally painted

******

HOW CAN WE ESTABLISH PEACE AROUND US

Naseer Wasim

I would like to thank all of the guests who have joined us here today. Your coming proves your compassion, brotherly love and respect for the feelings of others. In the world today the majority of people are involved in their own selfish pursuits and they expect their needs to be met without giving to others their due rights. Thus your coming here today is most praiseworthy.

To win hearts and to promote love in society is a very difficult task. A place of tolerance and respect for each others religions must emerge. The resources granted by God Almighty must be utilized for the betterment of our societies. God has granted great knowledge and wisdom and it is imperative that it is used to promote peace and harmony in society.

(1) Inner Peace

Peace with God
Peace with oneself
Peace with the world

There are many people who have no inner peace. What does Islam say about this?

The idea of 'inner peace' is something which is not properly defined.

(2) Unless it is well defined you cannot attempt to attain it. Peace is a concept which differs among the different schools of philosophies.

For instance, the Yogic peace has a different meaning. It only means that by exercise or by delving deeper into one's soul, a person finds himself to be without any agitation. So, the absence of agitation in man's desires is called **peace.**

(3) In the major divinely revealed religions of the world, which are Judaism, Christianity and Islam, peace is not just one dimensional or individual concept.

Peace is, **first**, to be at rest with one's own desires and ambitions and having a balance, which is an internal affair, and then, **secondly**, to have peace with the world around and to assure everyone that one poses no threat of danger to them - 'no danger will emanate from me in the other's direction'. It is this wider concept of peace which you find in major religions. In this concept of peace, no one can be at peace with himself until he is also at peace with his neighbors and with others. This is also the concept of peace in Islam.

(4) In Islam the concept of peace is two-fold. Firstly, to be at peace with God and then, secondly, to be at peace with oneself and with the rest of the world.

The concept of peace in Islam is the most comprehensive of all the religions and philosophies, the key to it lies in the fact that in Islam the word 'peace' does not only mean to be at rest, it also means submission.

(5) The meaning of this one single word has two aspects. One is peace as ordinarily understood and the other is peace in the sense of submission.

So, according to the Qur'anic concept of peace, no peace on earth can ever be conceived, or established, just by human effort.

It cannot even be conceived theoretically without man finding God, the Creator, without recognizing the hand of the Creator universally at work in nature.

(6) **So, once man recognizes his Creator, then the second step is to be at peace with Him, and this peace has this dual meaning: Firstly, not to do anything which creates a distance between you and the creator, and secondly, submission.**

So, both these meanings join hands at this stage. Submission to the will of God is the only means of attaining peace with God and this is a declaration which is proven by human experience. It has a profound wisdom which is universally experienced by man. If children are at peace with their parents, it is impossible for them to defy their parent's orders and wishes and yet be at peace, ultimately the meaning of

peace is submission.

In Islam the journey to peace begins with the attainment of peace with God, the Creator and for this you must understand His attributes. We must know what He is and this in Islam cannot be achieved through delving deeper into yourself because you can make many mistakes. If there is a God, He has to be an **external** reality, and then He must introduce himself to man and that is what actually happened in all the divine religions – it was God who revealed himself to mankind. It was never man or woman who by his/her own efforts reached God without help from God. First this much should be understood. I will then come to the latter part of the concept of peace, peace within a person and peace between people.

(7)Why is it essential to find peace with God? Why is it that no peace can be established without returning to God?

(8) God is the ultimate reality who has created human beings according to his own attributes and peace means a complete balance between man's attributes and the attributes of God. When there is no friction in any aspect of human behavior caused by being at variance with God's attributes, this then is the ultimate peace.

No other definition of peace can hold good. Whenever God's attributes and man's attribute join, they become alive and there is peace. Whenever they are at war, there is friction, and there is disturbance, psychological as well as otherwise. It is the disturbance which is created within humans which causes all the disturbances in human relationships with each other, and in the international relationships between people and between states.

Everybody knows that in almost all religions, God is defined alike in his attributes. Religions differ with each other in other things, but

(9) God is expressed as perfect goodness.

No flaw can be attributed to God's attribute or behavioral conduct, in the concept of God in any religion.

All tell universally that God is true.

All claim universally that God is just.

All claim, without variance, that God is compassionate, merciful, forgiving.

These are the attributes that I had in mind when I said human attributes must come at one with God's attributes and there you can never be mistaken about peace. Let's begin with truth.

Only when man becomes true can he find peace with himself.

(10) Truth is the most important fundamental first step towards peace and this is the meaning of becoming like God.

You cannot be God but you can imitate God in all the good attributes of God which we have also received from God as his creation and when you become true to yourself only then will you be able to become true to your children, your spouse, your relatives and your society and when you enlarge the role of this single factor then nations can become true to each other. Even if you were to forget about all the other attributes of God, if you were just true, you will be identified as a godly person by all whether they believe in God or do not believe in God because the attribute of truth is in itself a godly character. So to be godlike but in humility, to try to achieve his attributes is the **only** passage to peace.

This is the only formula for creating universality in man. Without creating universality in man it is impossible to dream of peace and this universality can only be achieved through the image of God which is universal. Through Him, man can achieve such characteristics as are universally loved so that the human community, the human race, can become a single species if the human race submits to the will of God and becomes or attempts to become like God. Herein meet the two different meanings of peace, that is, peace in the ordinary sense, and peace in the sense of submission.

11) Islam and World Peace

The pace at which peace is fast disappearing from the world today has caused each sane and sensible person to worry. This includes religious people, and also those people who do not believe in any religion. Each group has its own arguments.

To establish true peace, we must understand the spirit of *true* justice. God Almighty tells us in the Holy Qur'an that peace will only

come about with *justice* and *benevolence*.

'O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah, Surely Allah is aware of what you do.' (5:9)

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has explained the meaning of this verse as follows:

"Allah the Almighty says about justice that it cannot be achieved without truthfulness, that your enmity towards enemy nations should not hinder you from dispensing justice. Remain just, because righteousness lies in it. Now you know that those nations that unjustly harm and hurt and cause bloodshed, and do not desist from waging wars, how difficult it is to deal with such people. The Holy Qur'an has not taken away the rights of even such mortal enemies and has enjoined justice and truthfulness. I say to you in truth that it is easy to deal with an enemy with hostility; but it is very difficult to safeguard the rights of opponents and to deal justly with your enemy.

(12)The way to establish peace. Do justice! And if you want to establish real peace, then not only do justice, but the strong should treat the weak with equity and treat them in the same manner as one treats one's dear and beloved ones and ignores some of their defaults.

The urge for real peace comes from the heart and the voice that comes from the heart is the only one that establishes real peace because it is based on love and warmth.

When man spreads disorder on earth, peace and security declines and righteousness all but disappears, God sends his Prophets to save the world. Over 1400 years ago, when righteousness had completely vanished from this world and disorder was at its pinnacle, God sent his final message through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Through the message of Islam, man was taught ways to honor the rights of God and the rights of mankind, which had either been forgotten by those who had believed in the earlier Prophets, or because these were new commandments of excellence which had not been revealed before.

(13)The Holy Qur'an Addresses All Nations of the world on the basis of humanity:

'0 mankind We have created you from male and female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the Sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All Knowing, All-Aware.' (49:14)

This is the Islamic teaching of brotherhood. A righteous believer is enjoined to adhere to this teaching and indeed to propagate it. This alone can foster love, affection and equality.

(14)Peace and security can only be guaranteed in the world when the false and oppressive notion of supremacy for some nations is eradicated.

(15)Peace and security cannot be established until people of each race and nation are able to recognize that they are indeed the children of Adam and created by a male and female and are therefore equal.

The apparent differences in mankind are only for identification.

(16)Our Spiritual Leader was asked while traveling: what was the difference between an Indian and a Pakistani? His answer was:

"The only difference was *geographical"*

If one is better than the other, it is in terms of righteousness alone. However, whose righteousness excels others, only God knows. No one can judge this for oneself.

(17) A Religion of Peace

Islam alone bears a name, the literal meaning of which is 'peace'. The Holy Prophet said:

"A Muslim is he whose word and deed do no harm to others."

(18)Islam enjoins peace not only between men, but also between man and his Maker.

Islam does not consider revelation and communion with God to be a thing of the past. It believes that the avenues of spiritual bliss trodden upon by Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the Prophet of Islam, are still open and beckoning to those desirous of close communion with God.

In Closing

God has never discriminated between one people and another. The earth created by God provides a common floor for all people alike, and His moon and shining sun and many stars are a source of radiance and provide many other benefits to all alike. All people benefit from the elements created by Him. Attributes of God teach us the lesson that we, too, should overlook injury and insult and be kind towards our fellow human beings and should not be petty of heart, bigoted, or narrow-minded.

Take it as certain that if we do not treat God's attributes with respect and will not shape its conduct in accordance with the conduct of God, then, that nation will soon be wiped out from the face of the earth. Not only will it destroy itself but it will also jeopardize the future of its generations to come.

****

SUPPORT HUMANITY FIRST

****

TABLIGH ACTIVITY: MIAMI JAMA'AT

Dr. Khalid and Mansura Minhas

The City of Hallandale holds a Memorial Day service every year to honor the fallen soldiers. It was a wonderful opportunity to introduce the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jama'at* to the local officials. City mayor, Joy Cooper, Commissioner Alex Lewy and Fire Chief, Daniel Sullivan were present. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Miami Chapter participated in the Memorial Day ceremony conducted by the city of Hallandle Beach, to honor the fallen soldiers. *Masha Allah* we had a great opportunity to introduce our *Jama'at* to the local officials

"Muslims for Loyalty" and "Muslims for Peace" brochures were distributed and well received by the participants of the event. The feedback was positive and the attendants of the Ceremony praised the outreach efforts of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to spread the true message of Islam. 250 copies were placed at the front desk of the City Cultural Center.

City officials thanked Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Miami Chapter for its volunteering services and donations for the City of Hallandale Beach in general and the Hepburn Center in particular. The mayor invited our *Jama'at* to participate in creating healthcare awareness at the city level, after the sudden and unexpected death of city activist, 41 year old Mr John Hardwick. Mayor Joy Copper, Commissioner Alex Lewy and Fire Chief Daniel Sullivan graciously accepted our invitation to visit our Mosque in the future.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaMu_5n0VzM
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7LYGNP5eZY

****

GRADUATION

Mirza Fateh-ud-Din Ahmad, Secretary Taleem, Oshkosh

- **Ali Akber:** Completed his Masters in Finance from University of Wisconsin, Whitewater.
- **Bilal Mian**: Graduated from elementary to Middle school.

Ameen

- **Mirza Ekaan Saalik-ud-din Ahmad**: Completed the first reading of the Holy Qur'an.
- **Fareeha Ahmad:** Completed her first reading of the Holy Qur'an.

AHMADIYYAT IN CHAK MANGLA

Anas Ahmad Mangla, Niagara Falls, USA

Chack Mangla is a *Pind* (a village). Hence its residents are often called, '*Paindus*.. The term *Paindu* is derived from Punjabi which simply means "villager". In derogatory terms it means 'a simple Joe': someone who lacks common sense; backward; or someone who may not be efficient street smart. They may still wear turbans, may stick to the good old fashion of wearing a *chadar* instead of a *shalwar*. I, too, was born in Chak Mangla, a small village in Sargodha District, but I grew up in the 'Ahmadiyya Abode of Peace' and 'Peace Village'. So I guess I am a recovering *Paindu*.

Chak Mangla [the Village of Mangla] is located on Jhang-Sargodha road, about 40 km south-east of Sargodha, 10 km from Market town of Sillanwali and about 60 km west of Rabwah. Just like most of the villages in Sargodha that were part of the early 1900s project to populate Sargodha, the design of this village is very simple: a main Bazaar is intersected by a few small bazaars. The center of the village is called "*Chauk*" (crossroad). When this area was populated each able man was allotted 25 acres of farm land and a quarter of an acre of a place to build a house in Chak Mangla. With each next generation these lands were divided into surviving children. Since people of Chak Mangla love children and love to have many, unfortunately the new generation is left with very little land for most of the families to survive. So these young men are forced to leave Chak Mangla and get exposed to the city life.

Before the separation of Pakistan and India most of the shopkeepers and businessmen in this area were Hindus. Their shops and houses were taken over by the people who migrated from India. Even though these people have been here for three generations but are still referred as *Muhajirs* [Immigrants].

There isn't much to do here. Chak Mangla is off the main road and in the middle of nowhere. Nobody comes here unless they have some business here. So, an outsider, or a new motorcar etc. is a fascination for young ones. If you are a local and returning from a trip, you are pretty much expected to tell your journey tale chronically in as much detail as possible. The people of Chak Mangla are usually oblivious to what's going on around the world because it has a very little effect it has on their life.

For men, keeping a mustache has been in fashion for ages, as it is considered to be a display of manhood. There's a saying: *"Muchh nahi te kuchh nahi"* (No mustache, no life). If you see someone fondling with their mustache they are simply trying to impress you and mark their place in that setting. People don't keep a beard as much and the people who do keep it are believed to be more religious.

We have electricity but no gas or running water. Since no one important lives here, we only get the electricity once in a while throughout the day so the electricity department can justify their hefty bills.

There is no police station here; the nearest one is in a town a few miles away. Someone can commit a crime and skip a few towns over before the police would decide to even pay attention to it. The crime better be worthwhile if you expect the cops to come over.

The services of barbers, ironsmith, and woodcrafter etc. are contracted each season instead of paying them each time the service is utilized. They're once paid with wheat at the end of harvesting season. And then they're paid when the farmers sell their cotton, again not in cash.

Everybody has a cell phone! A mobile phone's make, model, condition and feature reflect people's status in their small society. The better your phone is the more well-off you're believed to be. But it is highly recommended that you do not share your phone numbers with anyone unless you're fond of receiving "missed calls" at any given hours of the day. A missed call, for them, is to tell you that they love you enough to remember you, but not enough to actually waste their minutes on you. The local cell phone towers are a few miles away. To make a successful phone call you will depend on your location, direction or the air and luck.

The Chak Mangla is place of big hearted people. A guest of someone is a guest of everyone. The hosts will provide with anything and everything within their capacity to ensure you calm and comfort. In fact, it will be considered insulting if one is not offered something to drink or eat.

There are hardly any social activities except in the evening when most of the elders would gather at any of the local *Baithak* (Sitting place). *Hukka* (Water pipe) sits in the middle and its mouth-pipe travels from man to man. People would share their experiences and life stories. Some would talk; some would listen. Throughout the evening plenty of people will come and go and the host will make sure that they all have a fresh *Hukka* to smoke from.

There are three main Muslim groups in Chak Mangla: *Sunnis*, *Wahhabis* and of course Ahmadis. For the most part, they all tend to get along very well. In the beginning all of the Mangla people were followers of the *Wahhabi* sect. The main mosque in the village was built by all and still exists. Later when *Sunnis* influenced the area, some of the people accepted new sect. *Wahhabis* built a new mosque and let *Sunnis* keep the old one. *Wahabbis* at that time were huge followers of Pir Munnawar Sahib.

The undeniable truth is that it was Ahmadiyyat that actually put Chak Mangla on the map so to speak. This village is not any different from rest of the hundreds of other villages in the district of Sargodha except the fact that Allah blessed us with the message of Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as]. Allah opened the heart of a few *"paindus"* of Chak Mangla and then the rest of the area witnessed so many blessings of Allah on the members of *Jama'at.* May Allah continue showering his blessings on all of us for rest of our lives. *Ameen.* Ahmadiyyat has been introduced to Chak Mangla area since its existence. Maulvi Dilpazeer Bhervi Sahib was a regular guest in Chak Mangla. In the 1940s, Maulvi Azizur Rehman Mangla Sahib had a huge impact on the area. He held various symposia, *Jalsas* and *mubahisa* (dialogues) with the locals, in the light of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II's[ra] advise and prayers, and over the time, with the Grace of Allah won many hearts of God-fearing Muslims.

By 1953 most of the Manglas were converting to Ahmadiyyat while the rest of Pakistan was planning to destroy the *Jama'at.* Our beloved *Imam* at that time, Hadhrat Musleh Mau'ood[ra] was very please with it. Throughout his *Khilafat,* Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II[ra] would send a message to Chak Mangla *Jama'at* and asked them to come to Rabwah for a *mulaqat.* Manglas would load their tractor-trolleys with the members and get the blessings. *Masha Allah.* What a display of love from both sides. Until the ban of *Jama'at's Jalsa* in Pakistan, the Department of *Langar Khana* used to buy the animals to be slaughtered at *Jalsa* ahead of time. Some of these animals were then send to Chak Mangla and divided between the farmers to keep till *Jalsa.*

Maulvi Azizur Rehman Mangla Sahib (brother of Professor Dr. Inayatullah Mangla Sahib of Detroit) was one of the only Ahmadis to receive the *Shahid* degree without studying at *Jamia Ahmadiyya.* He recognized the need to memorize the entire Qur'an so he locked himself in a room and learned the holy book in only 40 days, *Al-Hamdolillah.* Even though he was a very simple person, he served the *Jama'at* various offices. He was most famous for being the *Ameer* and Missionary Incharge of Sialkot *Jama'at* during the Khalifatul Masih II's[ra] era. Maulvi Sahib's younger brother Barkatullah Mangla Sahib was martyred in Sargodha city in September 2004 by unknown terrorists. No one was ever arrested by the police.

Mohammad Aslam Shad Mangla Sahib has the blessed duty of serving as the private secretary of the last three Khalifatul Masih besides so many other offices. He is responsible for the Rabwah offices of Khalifatul Masih and has been serving at these offices for over 30 years. Shad Mangla Sahib's elder brother Mohammad Abdullah Mangla Sahib has been serving as the *Sadr* of Chak Mangla *Jama'at* for over 35 years, by the grace of Allah. He led the *Jama'at* through thick and thin. There had been incidents of the erasing of *Kalima, the* ban of MTA in this area, the ban of the *Adhan* and *Jama'at's Jalsas* and other events.

Alhamdolillah, this small town was given the nick name "little Rabwah" because so many regional *Ijtema's* and *Jalsa's* were held on a regular basis here. Our last three *Khulafa* (Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh], Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] and Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad[aba]) and many *Sahabas* of the Hadhrat Promised Messiah[as] have blessed Chak Mangla with their presence on many occasions. Since the introduction of Ahmadiyyat, education became a vital part of the young people of Chak Mangla's lives. The village of Dr. Abdus Salam is not too far from here too. He grew up in similar circumstances and by the grace of Allah, won the Nobel Prize. In Chak Mangla we do not have any Nobel Prize winners but the potential and the hope does exist.

5TH ANNUAL NATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SEMINAR HELD AT BAITUR RAHMAN, SILVER SPRING, MD

Amjad Mahmood Khan, National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija (Public Affairs)

The fifth annual National Public Affairs Seminar was held on the weekend of February 25-27, 2011 at the central USA mosque, Baitur Rehman, Silver Spring, Maryland. The annual event brings together locally elected public affairs secretaries to discuss matters concerning the *Umoor-e-Kharija* Department USA. By Allah's grace and mercy, this year, a record 105 delegates from 61 chapters (including 15 *Lajna* members) attended the seminar – an increase of 20 chapters from the prior year.

Special delegates included: *Ahsanullah Zafr Sahib (Respected Ameer Jama'at USA), Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib (Missionary in charge and Na'ib Ameer USA), Wasim Malik Sahib (Na'ib Ameer USA), Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah Sahib (Na'ib Ameer USA), Zaheer Bajwa Sahib (Nai'b Ameer USA), Abid Khan Sahib (International Press Secretary United Kingdom), Fareed Ahmad Sahib (National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija United Kingdom), Mohammad Dawood Majoka Sahib (National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija Germany), Asif Khan Sahib (National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija Canada), Nasim Malik Sahib (Member, Europe Committee For Human Rights Sweden), Masoud A. Malik Sahib (National General Secretary USA), Zafar A. Sarwar Sahib (Regional Missionary USA) and Yahya Luqman Sahib (Regional Missionary USA).*

The seminar began on Friday, February 25, 2011, with a special annual meeting of the National *Umoore Kharija* Team. Later that evening, the international guests in attendance – which included several delegates from the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and Canada – participated in a special "meet and greet" session with all local *Umoor-e-Kharija* secretaries, led by Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib.

The formal session began on Saturday, February 26, 2011, with recitation of the Holy Qur'an, led by Khalil Malik Sahib. Respected *Ameer Jama'at* USA, Ahsanullah Zafr Sahib, presided the opening session. Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib, National Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija* USA, welcomed all the guests and provided an impassioned introduction to the importance of the tasks at hand in light of the increasing global persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (particularly in Pakistan and Indonesia). Respected Ameer Sahib then delivered his opening remarks to all the delegates. He emphasized how local secretaries should engage with full vigor in *Umoor-e-Kharija* work, and in so doing, honor the work of the Promised Messiah[as], who himself engaged in extensive outreach in India (and beyond), including towards prominent public officials such as Queen Victoria.

Respected Abid Khan Sahib, International Press Secretary, then delivered an important address on Hazoor Aqdas's[aba] expectations for *Umoor-e-Kharija* work in the USA. Drawing on several contemporary issues in America, including the controversy over the mosque near Ground Zero, he stressed the importance of engaging the public with patience and wisdom. He said that we must strive to cut extremism at its root. He also conveyed Hazoor Aqdas's[aba] desire that the USA chapters engage with at least 50% of their local public leaders.

Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib then delivered a thought-provoking lecture on "Islam and Civic Engagement." He discussed the importance of *Umoor-e-Kharija* work in light of Qur'anic teachings. He explained the importance of obeying one's government and cooperating with all those officials who are placed in authority above you. He then shared best practices for *Umoor-e-Kharija* work

based on his personal experiences working with public officials in Canada.

Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib then shared the annual report of the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* Department. He highlighted key activities in all areas of outreach, including federal (congressional), state/city, intellectual, NGOs/think tanks and refugee/asylum. The report covered a range of topics and highlighted particularly challenging assignments, including activities related to the current crises in Indonesia, Thailand, China and Egypt.

The second session of the seminar was presided by Respected Nasim Rehmatullah Sahib, *Na'ib Ameer Jama'at* USA and head of the USA Media Team. Muhammed Ahmad Chaudhry, local *Umoor-e-Kharija* secretary of Silicon Valley *Jama'at* and a member of the USA Media Team, along with Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib, discussed the importance of having a coordinated and integrative approach to outreach in the USA, utilizing the resources of all *Jama'at* departments and auxiliary support. Muhammed Ahmad Chaudhry Sahib then provided an extensive overview of the "message map" of the *Jama'at* and introduced all delegates to basic and standard terminology and branding.

The third session of the seminar was presided by Respected Abid Khan Sahib. It included a special interactive panel discussion with international delegates, including Fareed Ahmad Sahib, National Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija* (United Kingdom), Mohammed Dawood Majoka Sahib, National Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija* (Germany), Asif Khan Sahib, National Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija* (Canada) and Nasim Malik Sahib, Europe Committee for Human Rights (Sweden). Together with Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib, the delegates engaged in a roundtable discussion about best practices for

Umoor-e-Kharija work. Each of the panelists shared particular stories about his experiences in his home country. After the panel discussion, Qudus Malik Sahib, Member of the National *Umoor-e-Kharija* Team, discussed the proper method to respond to crises in the *Jama'at* and the importance of following *Nizam-e-Jama'at*. This lecture was followed by a detailed overview of the asylum and refugee process by Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib.

The fourth session was presided by Respected Zaheer Bajwa, *Na'ib Ameer Jama'at* USA. This session began with an overview of the National Department goals, presented by Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib. This was followed by three separate panels discussions: the first on effective federal (congressional) outreach (moderated by Mujeeb Ijaz Sahib); the second on effective state/city outreach (moderated by Nasir Bukhari Sahib); and the last on effective intellectual outreach (moderated by Qudus Malik Sahib). The panelists included secretaries selected from several different chapters across the country. Audience members were able to gain first-hand knowledge from secretaries who have demonstrated a track record of success through local efforts.

On Sunday, February 27, 2011, the Seminar resumed with a fifth interactive session dedicated to developing an implementation plan for each and every local secretary. The audience was divided into teams of 5-6 secretaries, and each group was tasked with formulating specific measures to localize the national department goals and put forth a quarterly (3-month) strategy to roll out to local *Jama'ats*. Each group's team leader presented his findings and summarized the best practices for creating a local grassroots strategy for success. After the interactive session, Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib and Mujeeb Ijaz Sahib discussed the forthcoming USA *Jalsa Salana* (Annual Convention) in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (July 1-3, 2011) and details about planning and preparation for the special Saturday guest session.

The final session was presided by Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib. A final report of the seminar was read out by Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib. Mahdi Sahib then delivered the concluding address, in which he reminded all delegates that it is the will and decree of Allah that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community will succeed and triumph, and that we must not forget this fact as we approach our vital tasks before us. He concluded the meeting with silent prayers, and the seminar was adjourned. *Alhumdholillah.*

******

PAY ZAKAT

******

Harold Camping Resets the End of the World Date

Syed Sajid Ahmad, Fargo ND

The failure of the calculations of Harold Camping is the triumph of the glorious prophecy of Hadhrat Mirza Ghualm Ahmad[as] of Qadian (1835-1908) who wrote more than a hundred years ago, *"Remember, that no one will descend from heaven. All our opponents who are alive today will die and no one will see Jesus Son of Mary descending from heaven. Then their next generation will pass away and no one of them will see this spectacle. Then generation next after that will pass away without seeing the Son of Mary descending from heaven. Then God will make them anxious that though the time of the supremacy of the cross had passed away and the world had undergone great changes, yet the son of Mary has not descended from heaven. Then the wise people will suddenly discard this belief. The third century after today will not yet have come to a close when those who hold this belief, weather Muslims or Christians, will lose all hope and will give up this belief in disgust. There will then be one religion that will prevail in the world and only one leader. I have come only to sow the seed, which has been sown by my hand. Now it will sprout and grow and flourish, and no one can arrest its growth." Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 20, p. 65 (1903).*

The above prophecy was written 108 years ago. Harold Camping has helped weaken the belief of fellow Christians in the wrong interpretations of Biblical predictions steering them closer to the state envisaged in the above prophecy. We can see today how the world has changed, so much so that a colored son of a Muslim is the head of the greatest Christian nation on the face of the earth. And as prophesied, no one has descended and no one will descend from the heavens. As a matter of fact, there is nothing wrong with the prophecies of the Bible. If there is something wrong, it is with the refusal to accept their fulfillment. The problem started with the refusal to accept Muhammad[saw] who fulfilled numerous Biblical prophecies. Muhammad[saw] appeared over Mount Paran with ten thousand saints with a fiery law in his right hand fulfilling the prophecies of Moses[as] about "that prophet." He was the Spirit of Truth who told everything which Jesus could not tell. American Christians, with Billy Graham at top to downwards, are looking for a bright future in the second coming which is not possible on their terms as it has to happen on their Creator's terms, and they are interpreting Creator's terms in the terms their dreams and desires. They do not ponder that Jews did not accept Jesus as Jesus did not stand up against the Romans and delivered them from their rule as they were hoping. Today the Christians wish from the second coming the same as the Jews of the days of Jesus wished: annihilate everyone who is different from them. Is it not how they are presenting their understanding of rapture and the aftermath of second coming? Such second coming cannot take place. Both according to the Bible and a tradition from Muhammad, the second coming was to happen 1260 years after "that prophet," fixing the time of the second coming around late 1800s. The Christians continued to look inside and missed the event resulting in the emergence of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Baha'is, etc. Then to top it off, the Christians have taken the rapture as literal as many take the 6,000 year as the age of the earth. How can a spiritual revolution be as physical as has never been throughout the known history of prophecy? Rapture has the glorious meaning of spiritual ascension of the believers into a better relationship with their Creator and an advancement in moral integrity compared to the descent of the non-believers into spiritual disintegration and moral decline. Physical ascension can never carry the peace, ecstasy, joy and pleasure attained through the friendship and communion with God. The second coming has to be a unifying force in today's multiculture society rather than sacrificing great multitudes of people to prove the sanctity of a single thought. A person who has connection with and respects all religions a part of God's kingdom and considers adherents of all faiths a people of God and very amenable to live in harmony. As for as the end of the world is concerned, it has different meaning in different contexts. A turning point in the life of an individual or a family or a group or a nation can lead to the end of their world or usher in another era.

Thinking in non-religious environment, it does not look like that man has become as frail as not being able to sustain himself for a few hundred more years, rather it looks like that he has just started to discover himself and his capabilities. In a religious context, he has also not exhausted his will and his longing to reach and find his Creator, to research and understand His word, to expend his abilities in His worship, praise and obedience. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] (1835-1908) deducted from scriptures that it may be another thousand years before man may be in trouble but even then it will be up to God how to show His mercy and Grace to man and give him another world to live and prosper. During the last three decades I have come across predictions of the end of world many a times. Each time I sleep at night unbothered as I know that an important turn has been missed by a multitude and they now are bewildered as how to reconcile the numbers they have in their scriptures and traditions so much so that many have started saying that no one knows except God and that even Jesus did not know rather than accept the ones sent by God in accordance with his word in the Bible.

During the last three decades I have come across predictions of the end of world many a times. Each time I sleep at night unbothered as I know that an important turn has been missed by a multitude and they now are bewildered as how to reconcile the numbers they have in their scriptures and traditions so much so that many have started saying that no one knows except God and that even Jesus did not know rather than accept the ones sent by God in accordance with his word in the Bible.

Holy Qur'ans From Around the World
An Exhibition Organized by Ahmadiyya Muslim Students Association (AMSA)

Tahir Khan
President, AMSA

Saying *Labbaik* to the directive of our beloved Hadrat Khalifatul Masih al Khamis[aba] specifically to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA regarding Holy Quran exhibitions, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Student Association at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science organized a two day exhibition of *"Holy Quran's from Around the World"* on April 11 and 12, 2011.

The two day exhibition included display of Holy Quran's in several languages and was a huge success as many people visited our exhibition to learn more about the peaceful and compassionate teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Visitors included several physicians, professors and students. *Jazakallah* to Regional Missionary Imam Kauser Sahib and Shafeeq Sahib for helping out at the event.

******

Majlis Sultanul Qalam USA May 2011 Report

Majlis Sultanul Qalam USA (MSQ) seeks to: 1) Respond rapidly to media coverage of Islam through letters and editorials 2) Respond systematically to critics of Islam through scholarly rejoinders. The group endeavors to defend the honor and sanctity of Islam by waging a "Jihad of the Pen."

Towards this end, MSQ furnishes its most recent report for the reader:

- 31 writers published 48 pieces (letters/op-eds)
- 87% success rate (55 total submissions)
- Minimum Monthly Circulation Goal Met: 4.2 million
- Actual May 2011 Circulation: 11.3 million (conservative estimate)
- Total Circulation Nov 2010 - May 2011: 44.3 million (conservative estimate)

NEW YORK JAMA'AT PARTICIPATES IN THE HOLY QUR'AN EXHIBITION

Shoeb Abulkalam, Secretary Publications, New York

New York *Jama'at* participated in the BookExpo America in New York from Tuesday May 24th - Thursday May 26th 2011, in a 3 days book exhibition where a splendid exhibition of the Holy Qur'an with translations of over 65+ languages were displayed to the public. This noble inception bloomed from our beloved Hazoor's[aba] instruction from one of his Friday sermons where Hazoor[aba] has advised *Jama'at* members to propagate the message of Islam through displaying of the Noble Qur'an. The BookExpo was held in the heart of New York City, in Manhattan, in Jacob Javits Center. This is the biggest 3 day "BookExpo America" exhibition and the largest publishing event in whole of North America. Furthermore, it is exclusively a trade event with exhibitors engaged in distribution, sales, press and Public Relations along with rights business activity.

The overall attendance at exhibition was 21,000+, representing 68+ countries where participants attended as Independent booksellers, chain bookstores, retailers, librarians, editors, educators, literary agents and press, other nonprofit organizations, and religious organizations. The exhibition also had a significant media presence with over 1,750 individual press credentials. Exhibitors range from all of the largest publishing companies in North America to university presses, niche presses, digital book companies, independent publishers, gift companies and those companies who provide a service to the publishing industry.

This exhibition was an excellent networking and promotional opportunity where members affianced themselves with *Tabligh.* Our Exhibition of the Holy Qur'an Stall attracted curious participants who stopped by our stall (12'x10' square feet) and were astounded by the Holy Qur'an in over 65+ languages and commentaries. Even the Saudi Arabia's religious organization were thrilled as they paid a visit to our stall and showed special interest in the English commentaries of the Holy Qur'an. Exchange of Holy Qur'an took place among us and we presented them with our Holy Qur'an with Arabic & English Translation. It is surprising that Saudi Arabians had translations of Holy Qur'an in only one Language in their Exhibition Pavilion. Several other Islamic religious organizations were present also; Abu Dhabi, Oman, Dubai, and United Arab Emirates organizations are few worth mentioning. Our online alislam bookstore catalog, Holy Qur'an mp3, and pamphlets were distributed to the general public as well as the exhibitors. There were few libraries from different parts of the country who showed interest to acquire our Qur'ans and books on Islam for their libraries. A company from Singapore plans on marketing our Qur'ans in Singapore, while a Korean company plans to procure our Qur'an in Korean language for marketing purpose. There was also a director from seminary who wanted books on Islam for his students. Aside from these leads, one exhibitor placed the order to buy a copy of all the Holy Qur'ans in foreign languages and **the order was successfully** completed and we *Alhamdulillah* delivered these to his bookstore where he is displaying our Holy Qur'ans.

Alhamdulillah we were blessed with some of our tenacious *Jama'at* members who stood on their feet for hours and distributed our *Jama'at* literature, engaged in conversation with exhibitors who stopped by our stall, and visited every single stalls to give the message of Islam Ahmadiyyat. Tahir Sheikh, Ahmad Mubarak, Abdul Ghafoor, Al Hassan Atta, Rafi Ahmed, Naseer Ahmad, Shoeb Abulkalam, Ahmad Chaudhry, and Majeed Malik sahib were those members who participated in the BookExpo. Ahmad Chaudhry Sahib have recorded clips and taken photos of this program. Our *Jama'at* President Nazir Ayaz Sahib is specially to be thanked for his effort to make all the necessary arrangements for this

BookExpo and then spending whole days almost full time on our Stall and serving the visitors. Imam, Daud Hanif Sahib has joined us as well and really played a key role in engaging conversation with other religious organizations and spreading message of Ahmadiyyat across. Imam Sahib with two members visited Saudi Arabian pavilion and introduced Our exhibition of 65 languages Translation to them especially to one of the directors of Saudi Pavilion gave information about our service to the Holy Prophet[saw] and the Holy Qur'an and invited them to visit our stall. The director of the Saudi Arabian pavilion came with his translator to our stall in eagerness and saw the Holy Qur'ans translations, took pictures and requested a catalog of the translations. He showed keen interest in the Commentary of the Qur'an also. Imam Sahib presented a set of 5 Volume English Commentary which he accepted with graciousness. A DVD of the English translation of the Qur'an was also presented to him.

Our stall had a display of beautiful posters, and our finest *Jama'at* books along with the display of the Holy Qur'an in numerous languages. a laptop with a power point presentation of our website via internet was also out for display. Huma Hamid designed a banner with names of the languages that we have translated the Holy Qur'an and it added exquisiteness to our bookstall.

Special effort was made by Abdul Ghafoor Sahib, Secretary *Tabligh* of New York *Jama'at*. He systematically visited each and every stall in the Expo tand met with those who were incharge/ representatives and presented them with the catalog of our translations of the Qur'an in 73 languages, pamphlets, and our contact address which contained our internet information. He also gave the DVD of the English translation which was prepared for the occasion to those who desired it. It was a difficult exercise but Ghafoor Sahib prepared them with the help of his team member, Rizwan Akbar Sahib who was able to make thousands of copies of the Holy Qur'an mp3 within a day! They all sacrificed their time and effort with pleasure and with great efficiency. Also we are grateful to Arshman Ahmad and Rashid Ahmad for their support with transportation and mobilization. We are also thankful to Mubarak Jamil Sahib for providing us with the book shelves where we displayed our Holy Qur'ans. The exhibition was funded by alislam.org under the chairmanship of Nasim Rehamtullah Sahib and supported by Naseem Mahdi Sahib.

Alhamdulillah this was a joint effort from the whole of New York Metro region and this was a great success for us all. We plan to hold a similar bookstall during the month of July in Harlem, called the Harlem Book Fair, where we will be able to sell books to the general public. We are requesting for prayers. *Ameen.*

NEW YORK JAMA'AT

There was an Interfaith meeting held at a Nigerian Mosque in which *Jama'at* members took part. Brother Ishaq Rosiji, a member of the NY *Jama'at* from Nigeria who is very devoted to the cause of Ahmadiyyat, represented the *Jama'at.* A lot of members of the audience had some relation to Ahmadiyyat already. We gave them 100 copies of "The Muslim Sunrise" and a generous amount of 2011 *Jama'at* calendars, as well as some other literature. On May 9, 2011, there was an Interfaith meeting held at a local school in which there were three speakers, one from each major religion of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Beside the school staff members, there were 20 students. It was not a debate, but rather an informative session to increase the knowledge of everybody in attendance. We also handed out a few books and pieces of literature.

Another interfaith meeting was sponsored by a nearby high school where Islam was represented by Imam Daud Hanif Sahib

****

CORRECTION

Please read the verses of the Holy Quran (89:28-31) on pages 14 and 25 of the March 2011 issue of the Gazette as follows.

يَاأَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ
رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۝ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ۝
وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ۝

INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM ON "SANCTITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES"

Abdul Naseer Kakkada, Minnesota Chapter

The Minnesota Chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA organized an Interfaith Symposium on the topic – Sanctity of the Holy Scriptures – at Mankato, Minnesota a small town with a population of over 70,000. Speakers from the Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions were invited to present their point of view. An Interfaith Minister also participated in the discourse. Dr. Muhammad Abdul Khaliq (President, AMC Minnesota Chapter) moderated the symposium.

The Symposium was started with the recitation of the Holy Qur'aan by Nasim Ahmad Sahib. The opening speaker, Dr. Harry Solo, citing the clear division between sacred and profane within Judaism analyzed the sacredness of Torah. Within the Jewish faith, the Torah is treated with such reverence that no physical touching of the parchment on which Torah is written is allowed. In parallel with the Torah (the written law) there is also an oral law – consisting of Mishnah and its commentary (Gemara), which form the Talmud. He concluded by mentioning that the principles of the Jewish faith are constantly debated upon and it is ever evolving.

The Christian speaker, Pastor Dean Wolf, started by presenting the three phases of biblical understanding: a) Pre-critical naiveté ('truth' without understanding), b) Critical thinking (pondering and understanding the lessons within Bible), c) Post-critical naiveté (understanding the miracles of God), as Bible is at the very foundation of Christianity.

Within these phases of Biblical understanding the speaker mentioned that an individual's approach to scripture is heavily influenced by tradition, reason and experience, which forms the three poles of faith. The speaker concluded by offering a Protestant viewpoint that the scripture is also looked upon as a piece of history which was written down many decades after being first revealed.

Rev. Janis Gorman, head of the Inter Faith Center in Mankato presented the interfaith perspective. Even though she was brought up Roman Catholic, she realized from an early age that other faiths/scriptures held truth as well. Rev. Gorman presented a personal viewpoint on the scriptures in that the teachings contained within the scriptures enabled her to be a better mother, wife, grandmother and overall a better citizen in the society. In essence, scriptures being the word of God provided her guidance in her quest to be a better person. Emphasizing on tolerance, the speaker mentioned that as human beings we can all live together with many different sacred scriptures and that she was extremely pained by the burning of the Holy Qur'an recently. She concluded by mentioning that true understanding of one's own religious tradition can only be attained by understanding other scriptures as well.

The Hindu speaker, Dr. Bakesh Nandi, started his discourse by mentioning that compassion and personal connection is the key to the hearts and minds of human beings. Introducing the Hindu faith, he mentioned that Hinduism has no equivalent of the "Bible" in that even though the Bhagavat Gita is the authoritative scripture, it has no final say in religious matters. Hinduism being the philosophy of life in the Indian subcontinent is characterized by an absence of strict rules/principles. Different Gods represent different aspects of life and Hindus have no obligation to any compulsory "worship." The three principles of Gyan (Knowledge), Dharma (Justice) and Bhakti (Devotion) forms the foundation of the Hindu approach to life. Dr. Nandi concluded his presentation by asserting that religion should be an instrument to improve ourselves as human beings and to promote love, respect and kindness in the society.

The Muslim speaker, Imam Inam-ul-Haq Kauser, commenced his presentation by praying that May Allah the Almighty grant honor to all attendees as they are gathered in honor of His holy scriptures. In extending his appreciation for the freedom that individuals/communities enjoy in the American society, he thanked Americans for extending peace/tolerance towards Muslims in the US even after the tragic events of 9-11. He mentioned that even though God is referred to by different names, God is One and the same for all. Islam as a religion teaches that every nation has been sent prophets starting from Adam[as] and as such Muslims accept all prophets. In fact, Imam Kauser claimed that he is a hundred percent Jewish even as he is a Muslim. Talking on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, he mentioned that Mary[as] – the mother of Jesus[as] – has been mentioned as a model for all women. In fact, the commonalities between faiths far outstrip the differences while it is most unfortunate that many individuals fail to see such points of similarity. Imam Kauser quoted verse 41 from Chapter-22 of the Holy Qur'an: "And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated." as a proof that indeed Islam encourages co-operation and tolerance amongst faiths.

Imam Kauser also presented a tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam[saw] that none can be true believers until an individual desires for others what he desires for himself. In conclusion, Imam Kauser, speaking on the book "Message of Peace" written by the reformer of the age – Imam Mahdi[as] – encouraged all to "tear down the wall of hatred" and to promote love for all and hatred for none. The meeting concluded with a lively Q&A session followed by silent prayer led by President Minnesota Chapter, *Alhamdulillah.* A total of eighty six individuals attended the meeting which was held in the auditorium of Blue Earth County Public Library, Mankato Minnesota. The guests were served refreshments and the audience got the opportunity to intermingle with the speakers.

****

Brief Report of a Tarbiyyat Seminar

Waseem A. Nisar - Chicago West

Under the directions and guidance of the National Tarbiyyat department, Chicago West Jama'at hosted a Tarbiyyat seminar on Sunday – May 8, 2011. Respected Nasir Mahmood Malik Sahib, national Tarbiyyat Secretary, conducted the seminar. The topic of the seminar was *Muslims for Peace – Our Identity and Priorities.*

The program started at 11:00 AM with the recitation of the Holy Quran and its translation, followed by brief introductory remarks by the local President, Dr. Qazi Masood Ahmad Sahib. National Tarbiyyat Secretary Sahib led the program in a very easy-to-understand and interactive, yet in a comprehensive, manner. The seminar covered a range of subjects: basic Islamic concept of peace from different angles; what differentiates Ahmadi Muslims from others; and how we should maintain our distinct identity and keep our priorities straight in the USA. The Islamic perspective of peaceful marriage and family life was also highlighted and extensively discussed in the program. More than 150 members - including men, women, boys, and girls - attended the program and enthusiastically participated in the discussion. The program ended at 2:30 PM with silent prayer, led by the local President Sahib, followed by Zuhr Prayer and lunch.

Members gave very positive and encouraging feedback about the program - both in terms of its content and the way it was conducted - *Alhamdolillah. Majlis Amila* and members of the Chicago West Jama'at are grateful to Nasir Malik Sahib for his efforts and dedication - *Jazakallah Ahsanal Jaza.* We pray to Allah so we all become true representative of *Muslims for Peace* and keep *our identity and priorities* and win His pleasure and nearness.

A TRIBUTE TO MY LATE GRANDMOTHER: PROFESSOR RASHIDA TASNEEM KHAN SAHIBA

Danial Mashud Ahmed Khan, Calgary, Canada

Fate is strange. They said that there was no way we were getting to Philadelphia the night of Friday, April 22nd, because there was a huge delay in Chicago, from which we were to take our connecting flight. They were wrong. They said we'd be lucky if we were there by noon on Saturday; instead we arrived at two o'clock that morning. We were expected to arrive at midnight, but we were not complaining, all we wanted was to get to Philadelphia as soon as possible.

After about ten hours of traveling, we were filled with relief that we got to Philadelphia safe and "on time". I was ecstatic. I ran into my uncle's home; my aunt opened the door. I greeted her, dropped off a few bags with my mother close behind and headed back out. It was raining. When I realized that the car was locked, I turned back and asked my mom to open it. But, the second I turned around, I saw my aunts face dissolve into hot tears and I realized what happened. My grandmother had passed away just shy of sixteen minutes ago. I stood in the rain for ten minutes afterwards, wondering why we could not have seen her, mostly why she couldn't see that we were here. We were too little, too late.

The world is crawling with "*could've*s", "*should've*s" and "*would've*s". With "*I wishes*"," *I wants*", "*I would rathers*" and "*I would rather nots*". They creep around with silent precision, like leeched in a starving ocean. My grandmother fought these all off. In the four years she had cancer; she visited Canada twice and witnessed the birth of two of her grandchildren. She did not let anything stop her, she was a hero.

My grandmother kept all the memories of all her grandchildren's youth. Whenever she told the stories it was like we had never heard them before, even though we lived them. I talked to her about two weeks ago. I forgot what we talked about though.

Both my grandparents were teachers in poorer areas. I would not be the person I am without my teachers. God bless all teachers who show poise in their profession. It is beyond heavenly irony that even though God had taken a life from us, he had given us one back. When Sarah, my uncles daughter, was born, her health was not as good. But as she strengthened, my grandmother weakened. Irony.

In my youth, I was closer to my mother's parents. With them I learned the values of love and friendship. Only recently had I really gotten to know the other side of me, the values of education and piety, and I am grateful for that.

During her funeral, I was absent from the congregation. I was in distress. Four people had already told me that one day I'd join her; curiously reassuring my worries. One thing was for sure: I had to escape. So I then retreated to the prayer hall, a beautiful prayer hall, and sat silently. My mind was racing with one thought though; the difference between belief in God, and a perception of God. When you pray do you know that there is a God listening? Or, when you are in a deep and spiritual prayer, are you aware of his presence before you, jotting down what you are begging of him? Oh! How I wish I could one day break that barrier!

Then, on a windowsill, I spotted a Holy Qur'an. I took it and began a recitation. Such a deep and mournful recitation, such a relaxing repetition. I then flipped to the index and found many verses regarding death... and a shocking number of them ended with God saying that his mourners will never understand the hub of such pain. This recitation was such that as I read each word, it was as though it was being read to me by a heavenly voice, by a forsaken voice, *by a Godly voice*. Once I finished, I held the Qur'an to my heart and lets its fey break into my chest and fill it with heavenly air. At that moment, two promises entered my mind: one was that I will not cry, the other (which I still do not understand) was that I would not read another funeral prayer for her. And let God, the one gracious God who had blessed us with our Holy Book and a loving grandmother to read it aloud, be my witness when I say this: at her burial, I put my left hand on her grave, it descended and the warmth I felt in it was the exact same that I felt in the Qur'an. Thus I concluded that my grandmother's soul rests in the Holy Qur'an. *My God raise your status in heaven and may He grant you all your wishes. Ameen.*

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

3rd ANNUAL RETREAT

Ahsan M. Khan

The 3rd Annual Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association (AMMA) retreat took place from May 27 to 29th Washington DC. 52 Physician members of AMMA from as far south as Jacksonville, Florida and as far west as San Diego, California gathered for the weekend event which featured scientific presentations, interactive discussions and tours of various sites in and around Washington DC.

This year's retreat was held at the Dulles Holiday Inn near Dulles Airport. Attendees stayed in the hotel and separate conference rooms for men and ladies were set up with video projectors and two-way microphones.

The proceedings began on Friday May 27th with an interactive social 'Show and Tell' ice-breaking session in the evening in which members introduced themselves to the attendees and shared stories of their background and interests. This was followed by dinner and prayers.

On Saturday morning, spouses and children embarked on a guided coach tour of the Capitol Building in Washington DC. The scientific session for physicians began that morning in the conference room. The proceedings were led by Dr. Lutf ur Rehman, President of AMMA, and presided by Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, Na'ib Ameer USA.

Dr. Mansoor Qureshi gave an update on treatment for atrial fibrillation, and Dr. Mubashar Mumtaz introduced a novel surgical technique for management of this common arrhythmia. This was followed by discussions on Vitamin D deficiency by Dr. Hafeez ur Rahman and a discourse on various radiologic imaging studies in the clinical setting by Dr. Uzma Rana. Dr. Tahir Ijaz presented his investigation of the radiation risks of cell phones. His conclusion was that these devices pose no cancer risk but excessive use may be detrimental in other ways and moderation is always advised.

Following a break, the second session featured presentations on AMMA medical mission work. Dr. Naeem Lughmani presented an update of Humanity First medical and disaster relief work in 2010. Dr. Fizan Abdullah shared his teams' experiences during a recent surgical mission trip to Ghana. Dr. Ahsan Khan then shared his experiences with the Gift of Sight eye camp held in Guatemala in September of 2010. He also provided a presentation on leading causes of blindness worldwide and strategies to conquer this global problem. Dr. Mubashar Mumtaz presented his volunteer experiences as a cardiac surgeon at Tahir Heart Institute last year, where he had the opportunity to perform complex cardiac surgeries in a highly efficient manner, something his peers in the U.S. marveled at.

Harris Ahmad of Pragmatium Consulting then enlightened the audience with a presentation on 'Leading in Turbulent Times', offering insight into leadership and team-building paradigms that can be used to improve our personal and professional lives. This was followed by a brief introduction by a representative of the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America (APPNA) who was invited as a guest.

A presentation was then made by Naseem Mehdi Sahib (Missionary In charge USA) on the Muslims for Life campaign and the plan to donation thousands of bags of blood to mark the 10 year anniversary of 9/11 later this year. Finally, Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Ameer Jama'at* USA, offered words of wisdom to the AMMA audience and concluded the session with silent prayers. He urged the physicians to study the writings of the Promised Messiah[as] and go about their personal and professional lives in a responsible manner.

During the afternoon, families had the opportunity to visit the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in nearby Chantilly, Virginia. The original Air France Concord jet, as well as the Enterprise space shuttle was on display, along

with hundreds of war aircraft and space exhibits. Families thoroughly enjoyed the amazing sites at the museum.

The retreat reconvened in the evening for dinner, followed by a fascinating presentation on medical facts pertaining to the crucifixion of Hadhrat Jesus[as], by Dr. Farid Ahmad. This was followed by a vigorous and enlightening question/ answer session. Another social 'Show and Tell' session took place in the evening, in which members shared jokes, poems, personal stories and life experiences during their medical careers.

On Sunday, the closing session was presided by Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah. Dr. Lutf ur Rehman opened up the general body meeting with introductory remarks. Dr. Naeem Lughmani provided an AMMA financial update for 2011 and Dr. Omar Khan shared his work on the AMMA newsletter and encouraged members to contribute to the monthly publication. Dr. Younus Ismail then shared his research on setting up a charity clinic in the US.

Dr. General Muhammad Nuri , director of Tahir Heart Institute, then addressed the conference via Skype video and urged members to donate their time to the institution per instructions of Hazoor[aba]. The audience was very appreciative of Dr. Nuri's time and service.

The floor was then opened for comments and questions by both men and ladies to the working committee regarding AMMA constitutional items, including annual dues and retreat dues (which will be put to membership vote at *Jalsa Salana* USA in July), future retreat venues and programs, help in placement of students and foreign graduates in residency programs, and the feasibility of charity clinics.

Dr. Lutf ur Rehman thanked all the members of AMMA for their participation in the retreat and encouraged everyone to spread the word to their fellow AMMA members around the country to improve attendance in future events, *Insha'Allah.* The event concluded with silent prayers. Some feedback from those who attended the meeting.

- Very well planned and conducted event. I thoroughly enjoyed and look forward to next year.
- Wonderful retreat! This was my first time attending and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone.
- A very successful conference!
- Everything went very well. We all enjoyed ourselves in the "country club"" atmosphere.
- Congratulations on the 3rd AMMA retreat. It was very well organized. Food was really well arranged. The families enjoyed the tour.
- If Ahmadi physicians attend it once, they would love to come back. In my opinion some of them may be taking this meeting as a routine *Jama'at* meeting, which has certain requirements and codes to follow, but this retreat has a completely different format. It may be taken as a relaxing, educational, social get together.

In all, the 3rd Annual AMMA retreat was a success, by Allah's grace. Prayers are requested for all who participated in the planning and execution of the event. *Ameen.*

Bowie Student's Award

Raaheela Ahmed, daughter of Shukoor and Nabeela Ahmed, received the following awards as a Senior from Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, Maryland. She will be attending the University of Maryland this fall.

1. In recognition for her service to SADD organization (Students Against Destructive Decisions), student body, and the Greenbelt community, she was awarded the **Marguerite DeRosa Memorial Award** for her activism to educate peers about maintaining a healthy lifestyle without drugs and alcohol. As President of SADD, she made a difference in fellow students' lives through her participation in the last 3 years and has been instrumental in all activities and monthly campaigns to build awareness of various dangers of drugs, alcohol, and smoking.
2. She is the recipient of the **David Craig Memorial Scholarship**. This scholarship is awarded to a senior active in the community, school, church, sports, and demonstrating academic, religious and community values, an all rounder. (She's been on the girl's Rugby team for the last 3 years). She received the National Honor Society Scholarship Award, showing leadership, character, scholarship and service. **She has served as President of the National Honor Society this year**, as well as the President and founder of the 'Do Something' club (club focused on community service), and also President of SADD.

BOOKSTALL AT PUBLIC MARKET

Mubarak Bashir, Rochester Jama'at

We have continued to reach out to the media and bring them to the mosque to spread the message of Ahmadiyyat. Recently we invited the local news to come to the mosque and discuss the incidents regarding Osama Bin Laden. They came to the mosque and asked our thoughts on this issue and did a short piece on our views. See the link: http://www.13wham.com/news/local/story/bin-Laden-photo/CVfmxDv8zEK_fBji8AXBVw.cspx

Today, marked the first day of our bookstall at the Rochester Public Market since last year. The day went very well and within the first hour people came to speak and buy books. Several media outlets were contacted and YNN came to report on Osama Bin Laden but also discussed our bookstall, our mission and the goals of our community. We got very good coverage, showing both the "Muslims for Peace" and "Muslims for loyalty" fliers. The link to this story is below: http://rochester.ynn.com/content/top_stories/542593/muslim-group-encourages-discussion-about-bin-laden-s-death/

The following are the results of today's bookstall: Fliers Distributed - 24; Literature Distributed - 39; Muslim Sunrise distributed - 3

Books Sold or Distributed: Qur'an with Short English Commentary - 2; Qur'an in Arabic - 1; What is Islam - 1; Islam the Misunderstood Religion - 1; Yassarnal Qur'an - 4; Selected Verses of the Holy Qur'an - 1; Life Supreme - 1
Salat - 1; True Story of Jesus - 1; Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam - 1

Qaid Khuddam Akbar, Mubashir Majoka and Faraz Khokar dedicated their time to make the events successful.

****

Exhibition of the Holy Scriptures

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Minnesota Chapter

The Minnesota Chapter of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC), USA has been holding an exhibition of the books of the Promised Messiah[as] and translations of the Holy Qur'an in the Blue Earth County Library, Mankato, Minnesota for one month each year since 1998. This year the exhibition was on the Holy Scriptures for the whole month of May 2011. The holy books displayed were from religion of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Hope Inter Faith, and Islam. Each religion provided a one page introduction about their books which was placed next to their holy books in the display cases. The major part of the exhibition was the translations of the Holy Qur'an in different languages of the world from AMC, USA. The translations of the Holy Qur'an in forty six languages of were displayed in the exhibition, and translations of English, German, and Urdu were displayed with opened Holy Qur'an so that people can read the translations. The Director of the Blue Earth County Library, Mankato Minnesota is supportive of this event which gives opportunity to the library patrons to know about the Holy Book of religion of Islam and other religions. "The AMC's efforts are commendable that they are bringing the books of other major religions for display showing mutual respect and understanding which is required these days". The Pastor Dean Wolf of Centenary United Methodist Church Mankato, and Rev. Janice Gorman of Hope Inter Faith Center, Mankato appreciated the efforts of AMC by organizing such events, and emphasized on continuing this event. They added that this is the first time ever such event has been organized in Mankato Minnesota. During the exhibition in month of May 2011, Minnesota Chapter of AMC held the Inter Faith Symposium on "Sanctity of the Holy Scriptures" in the auditorium of the library which was attended by more than eighty six people.

"MUSLIMS FOR LOYALTY" EVENT ORGANIZED BY INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA JAMA'AT

Imran Malik

On Saturday, May 14 2011, A Muslims for Loyalty event was held in Indianapolis, Indiana. The event was attended by about 100 people. Imam Naseem Mahdi Sahib, Naib Ameer and Missionary In-charge, AMC USA, was the Keynote Speaker. Additionally, Imam Irshad A. Malhi Sahib, our Regional Missionary guided us as we prepared for the event. Saima Sheikh Sahiba of National Media team arranged for an interview of Respected Naseem Mahdi Sahib on a local Indianapolis Radio station. This interview was aired on May 10th .

On the day of the event, Indianapolis Star, the largest newspaper in the state, printed a cover story titled, Pledging their allegiance. The news article explained AMC's belief in Hadhrat Masih Mau'oodas and advertised the Muslims for Loyalty event. It also pointed out the distinction that AMC has a *Khalifa* and when he speaks he represents the whole worldwide community. Other Islamic sects are unable to express their views with similar impact; therefore, it is difficult for non-Muslims to hear a coherent message reflecting the views of Muslim masses. The reporter visited us during the Friday Prayer with a photographer and published several pictures as part of the story. Quoting Imam Irshad A. Malhi Sahib, who led the Jumu'ah Prayer, he wrote, "Killing of other people is absolutely wrong and is not according to the teachings of Islam," Malhi said. The Ahmadi Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, taught his followers to "spread peace on earth." Quoting Secretary Finance Indiana Jama'at, Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib, he wrote, "Ahmadis consider loyalty to their governing authorities to be "in our DNA."

A Muslims for Loyalty poster was displayed prominently on a wall in the Conference room. Mian Amaar Ahmad Sahib, Indiana *Jama'at Khadim* received the guests and helped with the name tags while Usman Zia Sahib, *Qaid MKA* assisted walk-in guests with a sign-up sheet. Dignitaries were directed to the green room where they spent time with Respected Naseem Mahdi Sahib prior to the start of event. Mr. Mohammad Fytahi Sahib, Secretary *Tabligh* Indiana *Jama'at,* started the event with recitation of the Holy Qur'an, verses 59 and 60 of chapter *Al Nisa*. Abdul Rahman Andoh Sahib, Indiana *Jama'at Khadim*, read the translation. Then Imran Malik Sahib, President Indiana *Jama'at,* welcomed the dignitaries and assembled guests. Each guest received a commemorative pen with inscription www.muslimsforpeace.org along with a Muslims for Peace and a Muslims for Loyalty Flyer. Each dignitary also received the book, Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues by Hadhrat Khalifatul Massih IVrh. The event was covered by ABC and NBC local Indianapolis affiliates. ABC covered the event in 11PM News and NBC included it in multiple news programs throughout Sunday. The event was also videotaped and *Insha'Allah*, in a few weeks *Jama'at* members should be able to view it via www.ahmadiyya.us

Next, Sukrat Baber Sahib, Indiana *Jama'at Khadim*, presented a brief introduction of AMC. Maha Muzaffar, Indiana *Jama'at Nasirat*, followed with a poem she wrote for the event, entitled "Picture of Peace": Imran Malik Sahib introduced the host, Mr. Charlie Wiles, Director of International Interfaith Initiative. Mr. Wiles stressed the importance of such events. Responding to a comment, "Religion is the problem", which he received in an email as a result of the event advertisement he said, "Religion can be a problem as well as it can be a solution. Tonight, I think, we are all here, in like mind, that religion can very much be part of the solution when we work together. I believe, events like this are in the strongest tradition of our American democracy." Mr. Wiles then introduced the panel of dignitaries and asked each to make opening statements. The panel included,

Dr. Frank G. Straub, Ph.D.	Director of Public Safety, City of Indianapolis
Mr. Gary Coons	Chief Division of Homeland Security

Mr. Robert Race	Acting Supervisory Special Agent, FBI Indianapolis Division
Ms. Emmy Hildebrand	Military and Veterans Affairs Coordinator, Senator Lugar
Chris Worden	District Director, Congressman Andre Carson

Dr. Straub commended AMC for holding this event and illustrated the importance of the event by sharing a moving story. He said that on 9/11/2001 he was at the World Trade Center because he was preparing to join the NYC Police Department as, Deputy Commissioner of training. The story he shared was about Mohammad Suleman Hamdani, a 23 year old Muslim Pakistani American. When it was discovered that he was missing, the press and unfortunately even public officials immediately claimed that he was a terrorist and he was in the building to guide the planes to their target. This conversation went on in public until his remains were found in March of 2002. Included in remains was his bag. On that day, Suleman Hamdani, instead of going to Rockefeller Medical College, went into the WTC to help people. He was an EMT. He was killed when the north tower fell. Dr. Straub said, "Tonight's event is very important. Do we take time to think about how quickly we form opinion of each other based on appearance, based upon our ethnicity, based upon our accents, based on where we are from. All too often those stereotypes, those initial images, block all future conversations. They block understanding; they block opportunities for us to get to know each other, for us to work with each other in positive way."

Homeland Security Chief, Mr. Coons said, "We are here to serve you. We hope that you will partner with us and we will partner with you and we build stronger relationships and stronger friendships." Mr. Race, who supervises a joint terrorism task force and is responsible for the entire state of Indiana, spoke about the less known work of FBI; the community outreach. Ms. Emmy Hildebrand shared a letter from Honorable Senator Richard G. Lugar who was unable to attend in person. In his letter he mentioned that, we must continue to support exchanges that bring people from other nations into contact with talented Americans capable of explaining and representing our country. To achieve this he introduced Cultural Bridges program that provides scholarships to high school students from countries with significant Muslim population to study in the United States of America. Subsequently, the State Department has established the S-Program and thousands of students have participated many here in Indiana." Representing Congressman Andre' Carson, Mr. Chris Worden who has volunteered with Muslim communities in Indiana shared a thought provoking insight. The night of the Fort Hood shootings he received a call from a local Muslim leader asking that a statement must be issued to condemn the incident. Mr. Worden said, "I noticed at that moment that there is a paradox. Actions were taken that had no connection with the faith that most of us know and you (still) find yourself in a position (that) if you do not denounce it people will say why did you not denounce it. It strikes me as peculiar because there are other organizations that do not have that burden." The Indianapolis Star story included the remarks of some non-Ahmadi Indianapolis Muslim leaders. These leaders said that they did not see any wisdom nor any benefit in holding an event like this. Disagreeing with these comments, Mr. Worden said, "These denunciations have to happen; people need to know that the folks who are peaceful and recognize the true Islam, far outweigh those who do not." Mr. Worden also shared a letter from Congressman Carson. Congressman Joe Donnelly, who could not attend, in a letter thanked AMC for the invitation and said, "The campaign that AMC has launched focuses on interfaith dialogue, loyalty to the United States and maintaining peaceful coexistence. Your message is an important counterpoint to the calls to violence by extremists."

Respected Naseem Mahdi Sahib stated that he does not represent the views of all Muslims in the world but certainly those of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. These views are based upon the Holy Qur'an and the tradition of the Holy Prophet Mohammad[saw] as interpreted by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] of Qadian, founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim community. Mahdi Sahib said we live in a dangerous world because people do not have the time to discover the truth while many are busy spreading misinformation to perpetuate either personal or organizational agendas. Due to this people, specifically in the west, have a fear of Islam, they do not trust Muslims and in many European countries with large Muslim minorities the freedom of Muslims are being curtailed. This is the reason that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has taken it upon itself to inform and educate the masses, including Muslims, on the true edicts of Islam. Islam promotes a secular political system. The

Holy Qur'an Says, "Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you govern people, govern with justice. And surely excellent is that with which Allah admonishes you! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." [4:59] This verse is not just addressed to Muslims, so everyone is commanded to give trust, that is, by vote in a democratic system, to a person who is trustworthy. The verse does not make any mention that one should only trust a Muslim. In the next verse however, Allah[swt] specifically addresses Muslims, "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you..." - [4:60]. Some Muslims state that "among you" means that a Muslim is to only obey a Muslim government, whereas, Ahmadi Muslims unequivocally believe that this commands them to obey the leader and the rule of law no matter where they live. So what should a Muslim do when they disagree with a law or action of the government? Mahdi Sahib explained that obedience or loyalty does not mean that one cannot dissent. If anyone does not agree with a decision or policy of the government then he or she has the right to dissent; right to speak with their representative and share with them their views. However, they still have to follow the rule and regulation of the country they live in. The Holy Qur'an puts the burden of electing trustworthy officials on the citizens but makes the leaders themselves responsible for their actions. This model of obedience and loyalty is further supported by many verses of the Holy Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Mohammad[saw]. Muslims are not to create disorder in land, they should be grateful and they should love their country: He who does not thank people cannot be grateful to God." - The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw] ; "Love of your homeland, your place of residence, is part of your faith" - The Holy Prophet Muhammad[saw]

So what options does a Muslim have beyond dissent if they disagree with their government? Can they resort to civil disobedience, violent uprising or treason? No, Allah commands us to not create disorder. Yes, they can pursue legal recourse or if they dislike the government to the point that they cannot live happily, then they can migrate and go to a place that offers them a government and rule of law that they agree with. Mahdi Sahib next explained that Ahmadiyya Muslim Community believes that this message needs to be heard everywhere and it is necessary in order to protect the rights of Muslims; especially the ones living in some European countries where rights of Muslims all already are being restricted. For this reason in May of last year we started Muslims for Peace campaign in USA and by our estimate this message of peace has been reached to 60 million US citizens. This year, we are engaged in Muslims for Loyalty campaign and Insha'Allah, our goal is to reach 100 million Americans with this message. Our next campaign is Muslims for Life. On the 10th anniversary of Sept 11 2001, AMC will organize a blood donation campaign across USA wherever AMC is present. Our goal is to collect 10,000 bags of blood and it is expected to save 30,000 lives. The audience had been provided with a comment/question card and these were collected after the keynote speech. Respected Naseem Mahdi Sahib answered questions during the Q/A session. In their closing remarks, the dignitaries appreciated the efforts of AMC and the main portion of the program was concluded by silent prayer lead by Respected Naseem Mahdi Sahib. Dinner followed the main program. A book stall and a video "Islam Ahmadiyyat" was arranged in a separate conference room. Some Comments from the attendees: "Thank you for presenting this program. The information will be useful in speaking to co-workers to dispel falsehoods regarding Islam and Muslims"; "How can we sign up to receive notice of other outreach events like this? This was wonderful"; "Great Program! Good Insight! Looking forward to working with you!

Alhamdolillah, the event was a success. We were fortunate to have such a high caliber panel and it was a result of emails, calls and office visits. Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib visited the offices of the Homeland Security in Indianapolis. Imam Irshad Malhi Sahib and Imran Malik Sahib met with the FBI Special Agent In Charge in FBI's office in Indianapolis. A team of *Jama'at* members made calls to almost all law enforcements offices in the Indianapolis and surrounding area. Almost all Indiana *Jama'at* members participated in this event however the key organizers included, Imam Irshad A Malhi Sahib, Mr. and Mrs. Muzaffar Ahmad Sahib, Mr. and Mrs. Mohsin Ahmad Sahib, Mr. and Mrs. Haseeb Ghumman Sahib, Mr. and Mrs. Mohammad Fytahi Sahib, Mr. and Mrs. Dr. Saeed Ahmad Sahib, Mr. Usman Zia Sahib, Mr. Sukrat Baber Sahib, Mr. Abdul Rahman Andoh Sahib, Mrs. Anika Pirzada Sahiba and Mr. Imran Malik Sahib. A special thanks to Irfan Ahmad Chaudhry Sahib, President Seattle *Jama'at,* for his guidance as they had already organized a similar event in Seattle.

SAINT LOUIS TABLIGH CONFERENCES

Dr. Basiyr Rodney ED.D., St. Louis Tabligh Secretary

An Evening of Interfaith Warmth - January 29th, 2011

On a cold January winter day more than 200 friends and guests of the interfaith community gathered at the *Baitul Hafeez Masjid* in North St. Louis to talk about "How Our Faith Promotes Peace, Love and Harmony in Our Diverse Society Today." The gathering was graced with speakers from various faith traditions including United Church of Christ, Roman Catholicism, African Methodist Episcopal, Jewish Faith, Buddhism, Hinduism and the Muslim Community. The 5 speakers also brought other members of their congregations and friends. Guests at the event numbered more than approximately 150.

The speakers provided excellent and insightful discussions for the very attentive audience. The speakers list was very much a "who is who of the St. Louis and national interfaith community. Speakers included Dr. Udayshanker Kasinadhuni Hinduism, Dr. Kongsak Tanphaichitr Buddhism, Rabbi Susan Talve Judaism, Professor David Oughton Roman Catholicism. Rev. Richard Ellerbrake United Church of Christ, Rev. Lori Beason African Methodist Episcopal Church and *Na'ib Ameer* and Missionary In-Charge Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib representing the Islamic perspective.

The audience was provided with a program describing the tradition of interfaith conferences as enshrined in the Holy Qur'an, and as established in recent times by the Promised Messiah[as] and his *Khulafa*. The event was very well attended with representation from many faith communities across the St. Louis region. Ahmadis from Kansas City, Tennessee and Arkansas also travelled to Saint Louis for the event. Our regional missionary Inamul Haq Kauser Sahib welcomed all of the guests in a very universal and harmonious way. Saying welcome in three languages and presenting to the audience that these interfaith gatherings in *Jama'at-i-Ahmadiyya* were a dream of the community's founder, Hadhrat Ahmad[as] of Qadian. He quoted from a passage of the Promised Messiah's writing that he loves all people like an "affectionate mother". Imam Kauser also presented the universal and welcoming message of the Holy Qur'an and how we as Muslims must respect and love the Prophets as well as saintly figures such as Hadhrat Maryam. St. Louis President, Dr. Naseer Ahmad welcomed and introduced each speaker.

The Hindu speaker spoke about theism and the need for freedom and fraternity in faith. The Buddhist presenter gave a multimedia presentation on the Buddhist faith and the similarity of people, regardless of their background. Rabbi Susan Talve presented an inspiring talk on the "holy connections" that we share. She expressed how much she learned from all of the different faith traditions. She talked of the tapestry that made us all connected and whole. She talked about the active nature of love and the need for courageous and difficult conversations. She explained that it is these conversations that make peace possible. Dr. David Oughton talked from the Roman Catholic tradition about the need for caring and social welfare as essential to faith. He spoke of the teachings of Jesus and his teaching of serving, the sick, indigent and imprisoned. He also talked about the need to look at ourselves as a "world community" that provides for "law", "order" and "justice". He presented the need for interfaith dialogue and the ongoing link between the human family regardless of race. "The human race forms a human family". He presented how the Catholic Church presents "a preferential option for the poor". People should be "world citizens" and practice "*humanitarianism*" - a global political system for the world community. Reverend Dr. Richard Ellerbrake spoke about the United Church of Christ. He stated that the Church presents the teaching of love as an important part of cross-cultural understanding. There is a great diversity of belief within the United Church of Christ, and some of its members even do not believe in the divinity of Christ. He discussed personal interactions that he had with Muslim and other faith communities

as well as some transforming experiences as a young person. He talked about the "Just Peace churches dealing with wellness, wholeness and right relationships with all creation".

Reverend Beason is the Pastor of one of the most historic African Methodist Episcopal Churches in the United States. Rev. Beason presented a talk on the AME church and a personal testimony. Rev. Beason gave a history of the church as founded by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones. She talked about the mission of the church linking back to the Free African Society. "A plain and civil gospel that would reach those who were unlearned and those who were learned". She discussed the connection of the church to the Methodist tradition and to Christianity overall.

Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib gave a talk about how the traditions were connected. He presented many examples from the Holy Qur'an that confirm that Muslims are expected to believe in all the prophets. He presented some prayers that Muslims say that actually come from other prophets such as Moses. Maulana Mahdi Sahib also presented the work of the *Jama'at* on interfaith programs in the far reaches of Canada. The program concluded with stirring comments by *Na'ib Ameer* Maulana Azhar Haneef Sahib who thanked the guests for coming and reminded all to leave in high spirits. He prayed that we continue to maintain this spirit of togetherness and to remember that we all worship God and that all of the faith groups share a belief in God and the Divine in common.

Seminar: Islamic Teachings On Key Contemporary Issues Held On April 16, 2011

The seminar was organized to present key Islamic teachings in light of the Holy Qur'an. The seminar entitled "Islamic Teachings On Key Contemporary Issues" was held at the Ethical Society of St. Louis. The event was blessed to have different speakers from the *Jama'at* speaking on the following topics: "The Rights of Mankind in Islam" Dr. Chairul Bahri, "The Concept of Democracy and Government in Islam" Imam Azhar Haneef Sahib, and "Muslim Americans-Our Obligations to our Country" Ali Murtaza Sahib.

The President of the board of trustees of the Ethical Society, Mr. Alan Easton welcomed us personally from the podium and stayed for the seminar. Dr. Naseer Ahmad, St. Louis President welcomed the guests and in his opening remarks emphasized why such seminars are important for understanding the true teachings of Islam in order to remove the prevailing misconceptions. Chairul Bahri Sahib gave a beautiful recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and the respected speakers then gave scholarly presentations on their topics. A Q/A session and reception followed.

From our observations and interactions during the reception it was apparent that the speeches were informative and well received. A book table and display was organized and the guests showed interest in our books. On display was the Holy Qur'an with 5 volume commentary, the Holy Qur'an with short commentary (multiple languages), *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues*, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth,* and various other books and pamphlets. We also provided free copies of these books to guests that made requests. They were especially interested in "*Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues.*"

Everyone thought this was an excellent facility for our program. We had over 50 non-Muslim guests and a few non-Ahmadi Muslim professionals including two local imams. It is estimated that more than 50% of the guests came off the street as a result of the national media team's efforts, especially Sister Saima Sheikh Sahiba. The event was advertised to more than 300 media and press contacts in the St. Louis area. Major newspapers such as the St. Louis Post Dispatch placed the ad on their website. The Ethical Society also advertised the event on their calendar.

OP-ED: ISLAM PRO MODERATION

Saima Ahmad

It has been less than a month since the news broke of the killing of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. Navy seals in Pakistan. Relieved people were seen on the streets of America, rejoicing outside the White house and on ground zero apart from other places. This has been the biggest victory ever since the war against terrorism started almost 10 years ago.

Osama Bin Laden was known to belong to my faith, Islam, but cannot be called the best example of its follower. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

Whosoever killed a person – unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land – it shall be as if he had killed all mankind. (5: 33)

It is clear from this verse that if somebody is killed without a valid reason or just to create chaos, either way, it is equivalent to killing the whole mankind. Islam commands for conflicts to be resolved in a just manner and it says in the Quran:

"Remember that the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and thereby brings about a reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, Allah loves not wrongdoers" (42:41)

This verse clearly hints towards the teaching in Judaism that allows eye for an eye and tooth for tooth in order to serve justice but it is important to note that here God Almighty stresses at the significance of forgiveness as compared to action of taking revenge. The reason being that Islam discourages anything that can cause disorder and chaos in the society. The fact is that Islam does not allow for extremism in any aspect of life. While some faiths require celibacy on part of clergy and other life long devotees, marriage is considered a key segment of a Muslim society, something that helps in ridding many sins. It is all for moderation and balance.

Even pertaining to food, which is one of the most basic facets of life, it is advised to choose the middle road, the mere reason why the Prophet Muhammad[saw] never ate to his full. He has said: "Kill not your hearts with excessive eating and drinking."

What a simple teaching that came a little over 1400 years ago, presenting a simple solution to the present day epidemic of obesity. When it comes to spending, be it in the cause of the faith, luxurious living, occasion of a wedding or anywhere else, the prophet Muhammad[saw] always encouraged his followers to live a simple but dignified life style. His intention was not to see people in rags even though they could afford it.

Islam considers life to be very sacred. Just like killing somebody else is considered cruel, in a similar fashion, suicide is called a great sin. Extremist deeds of people like Osama and his followers have defamed my religion all in the name of Holy *Jihad.* Otherwise, the Prophet of Islam Muhammad[saw], when faced with an evitable situation of war, still tended to be very cautious not to hurt anybody who was not fighting in the battlefield. His clear instructions included never to hurt children, women, elderly and even plants apart from the kind treatment of prisoner of wars. It is a shame that these people have forgotten the true teachings of Islam and gotten involved in such violent actions that have resulted in loss of innocent lives including those lost on 9/11.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian[as] also stressed that the world does not need a bloody *Jihad.* Instead of wasting time on fighting wars, his teachings were to use the power of the pen to find the path to universal peace. Nobody can deny that extremism has no religion or boundaries. It flourishes when society seizes to show tolerance. Now that the mastermind behind the attacks of 9/11 is out of the picture, it is time to work together to rid of the remaining extremist groups and to try to live by my community's beautiful Motto: Love for All, Hatred for None.

TaQWA

Department of Taleemul Qur'an & Waqf-e-Ardhi
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA

Taleemul Qur'an Summer Camp—2011

"And, indeed, WE have made the Qur'an easy to remember. But in there anyone who will take heed" (54:41)
"The best among you is the one who learns and teaches the Holy Qur'an" (Sahih Bukhari)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

[10:58] O mankind! there has indeed come to you an exhortation from your Lord and a cure for whatever *disease* there is in the hearts, and a guidance and a mercy to the believers.

[10:58] اے انسانو! یقیناً تمہارے پاس تمہارے ربّ کی طرف سے نصیحت کی بات آچکی ہے اِسی طرح جو (بیماری) سینوں میں ہے اس کی شفا بھی۔ اور مومنوں کے لئے ہدایت اور رحمت بھی

- Writings of the Promised Messiah as and our Khul'afa on importance of the Holy Qur'an
- Every participant should recite 2 Ruku's (*with translation*) daily
- Congregational Namaz-e-Tahajjud, Fajr Prayers, and Dars ul Qur'an
- Plan on having competition i.e. Tilawat, Hifz-e-Qur'an, Nazm related to the Holy Qur'an.
- Make a list of participants who don't know how to recite the Holy Qur'an and focus on long term plan
- Emphasize on the regular recitation of the Holy Qur'an Daily, Regular classes on Recitation, Translation, Hifz, Quiz and Surveys
- Q&A with Murrabi sahib and other scholars of the Jama'at
- Have workshops and discussion sessions on the assigned topics
- Have sessions on the blessings of teh Holy Qur'an as well as our responsibilities

Region	Location	Date	Nazim-e-Aala	Contact
Mid West	Baitul Jamay Mosque	July 6 - 10, 2011	Chairul Bahri Sahib	cbahri@nd.edu
Head Quarter	Baitul Rehman Mosque	July 5 - 11, 2011	Haleem Chaudhry Sahib	haleemch@hotmail.com
New York	Baitul Zafar Mosque	July 9 - 13, 2011	Moeen Ahmad Sahib	mudsa.f@gmail.com
South West	Baitul Hameed Mosque	July 5 - 10, 2011	Majid Khan Sahib	skyscann1@gmail.com

Inspire | Educate | Mobilize

Waqf-e-Aardhi Update

A central goal of the Taleemul Qur'an and Waqf-e-Aardhi department is to mobilize members of the U.S. Jama'at by encouraging and supporting increasing levels of participation in the blessed Waqf-e-Aardhi scheme.

To support this goal, the department has launched a new project to develop an online Waqf-e-Aardhi application. This application will enable Jama'at members to submit Waqf-e-Aardhi requests and will provide a way for Amila members to specify the kind of help they are looking for. Multiple types of reporting will also be integrated into the application over time providing insight into Waqf-e-Aardhi participation.

The Taleemul Quran department will be rolling out the application in phases with the first phase expected to be available to the Jama'at later this year. Guidance and recommendations for devotees and Amila members will be provided once the application is online.

Reported by: **Khalid Asad**
TaQWA Assistant National Secretary

Waqf-e-Ardhi in Guatemala

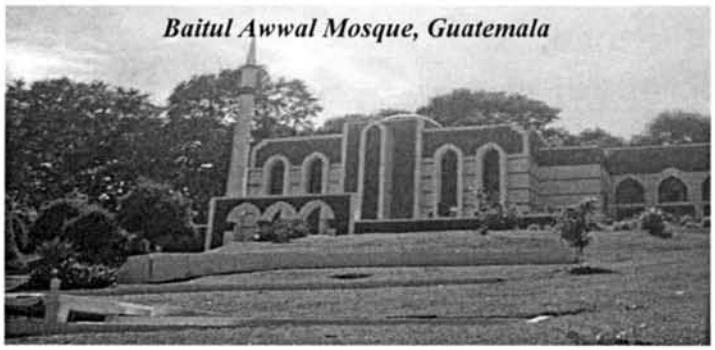
Volunteer to Teach Guatemalan Ahmadi Muslims How to Read the Holy Quran

We have a flourishing Jama'at in Guatemala that was established in 1989 when Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (ra) inaugurated the beautiful Baitul Awwal Mosque.

Hudhur (ra) visited Guatemala again in 1991. TaQWA is encouraging all members to consider going to Guatemala as part of the Waqf-e-Ardhi Program. We suggest going for a minimum of two to four weeks to teach local Ahmadis reading of the Holy Qur'an. You will have a spiritually rewarding experience, get to see a beautiful country and meet its lovely people, Insha' Allah.

Accommodations and local transportation will be provided. However, you are expected to purchase your own air travel [around $500] and have about $20 per day for expenses, such as buying groceries and/or souvenirs.

For more information, please contact **Khalid Asad** at kaasad@comcast.com.



Baitul Awwal Mosque, Guatemala

TaQWA Arranged Taleemul Qur'an Class at Baitul Naseer Mosque

The two-day Regional Taleemul Qur'an Class was held on April 16th -17th, 2011. It was planned and organized by the TaQWA team and hosted by the Miami Jama'at in Baitul Naseer Mosque. The program included instructional presentations of various Qur'anic topics. A separate children's program was held which consisted of competitions and an assortment of learning activities. All Jama'at members from the southeast region were requested to participate.

The weekend commenced with recitation of the Holy Qur'an. **Col. Fazal Ahmad Sahib** from Markaz presided over the session along with **Imam Muhammad Saeed Sahib**, **Habeeb Shafeek Sahib** from Orlando, and the President of the Miami Jama'at, **Munawar Chaudhry Sahib**. After an introductory session, activities comprised of presentations on various Qur'anic subjects and Hadith, such as rules for recitation of the Holy Qur'an with correct pronunciation (*tajweed*) and the translation of certain verses. More than 100 Jama'at members attended the educational weekend. **Sajid A. Khan Sahib**, Chief Administrative Officer of the National TaQWA Department, addressed the class via Skype on day two.

As a southeast region secretary, I would like to congratulate everyone. I admire all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the event successful. Insha'Allah ta'Allah we will be holding another class at the end of this year.

Reported by:
Fazal Qureshi
TaQWA Secretary
Southeast Region

Volunteers Needed for TaQWA

With the grace of Allah, the National TaQWA Department has embarked on various initiatives to inspire, educate and mobilize members to further the objectives of TaQWA. Currently, TaQWA is in urgent need of bright, capable and dedicated members for non-Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology (IT) roles, detailed mentioned below. Members are generally expected to work remotely (from home or office) and volunteer 5-20 hours monthly, depending on the volunteer position.

If you have the required skills for any of the roles mentioned below, we would like to hear from you! Please forward your resume or information to **Sajid A. Khan**, Chief Administrative Officer of the National TaQWA Department at sajid@microagility.com.

NON-IT ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Non-IT Roles	Required/Desirable Skillset
Project Managers/ Coordinators *(To manage initiatives)*	• Planning, management and/or coordination skills • Strong communication (English) skills • Good knowledge of MS Word, Project, Excel, PowerPoint • Ability to resolve problems without delay and/or to seek managerial intervention and operate under time-sensitive deadlines • Experience: BA or BS preferred plus minimum 3+ years of direct relevant experience.
Administrative Support	• Office administration skills • Strong communication (English) skills • Good knowledge of MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint
Marketing Managers *(To manage marketing campaigns of various TaQWA's initiatives)*	• 1-4 years of marketing experience; some experience in new media • Extensive experience with online marketing and online media • Experienced with different social media mediums and trends • Exceptional people skills and the ability to work alone or partner with other teams • Experience: B.S. in marketing or a related field from a four-year college
Communication Managers *(To write and edit communications)*	• Knowledge of principles and practices of communications and public information techniques through different mediums, including print, internet, and PowerPoint • Knowledge of writing and editing techniques for a variety of audiences • Superior writing and editing ability, specifically analytical and creative experience necessary to address targeted messages to a variety of audiences • Bachelor's degree in marketing, journalism, public relations, or a related field • 1-5 years of experience in corporate communications, marketing or public relations
Content Producers *(To develop and update content on our webpages)*	• Prior online journalism experience • Experience with publishing content online and familiarity with a CMS • Familiarity with Web tools, including knowledge of basic HTML and Photoshop • Ability to write and create compelling story packages • Understanding of SEO concepts • Bachelor's degree or equivalent
Graphics Experts *(To develop images used in creative projects, including presentations, brochures, direct mail, and webpages)*	• Strong design abilities and proficiency in software applications such as Quark, InDesign, Illustrator, and/or Photoshop • Agency experience required • Must have intermediate skills with: HTML CSS Flash
Videographers *(Produce video projects, including videotaping, editing and publishing for our audiences)*	• Capable of understanding our objectives and portraying them through video • Experience in television broadcast or corporate setting producing video content end to end • Knowledge and ability to use video and audio production equipment; ability to use graphic software for the development of graphics for television • Excellent communication, organizational and problem solving skills • Bachelor's degree in fine arts, graphic design, telecommunication, or a related field or 1 - 5+ years professional video production

IT ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

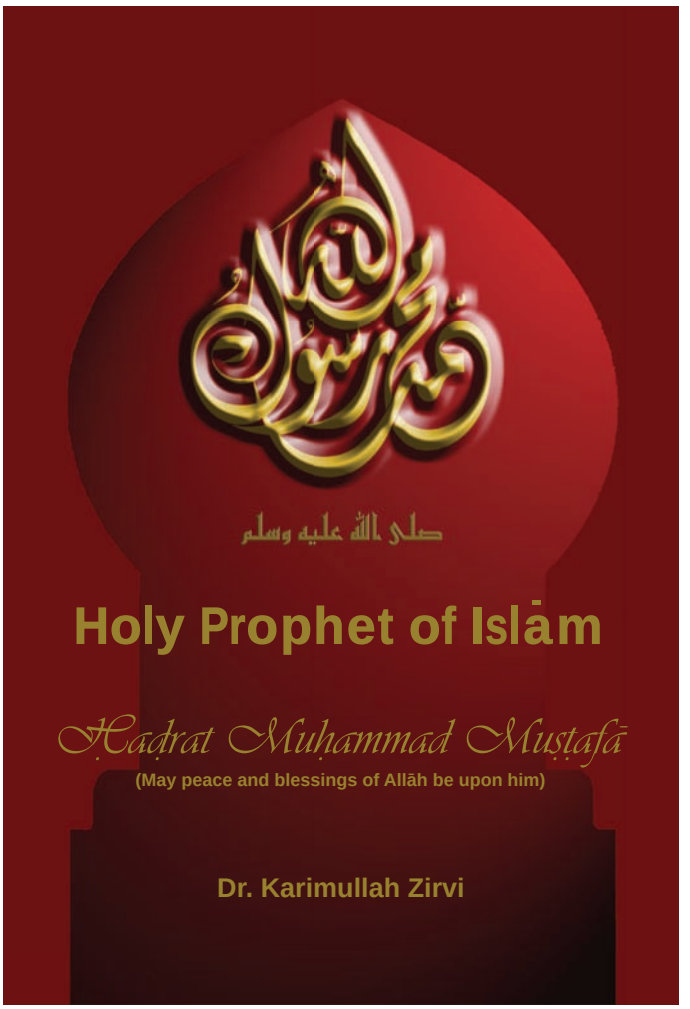
Core IT Roles	Required Technical Skillset
LAMP Developer, Sr.	• Strong understanding of software development life-cycle and best practices • Strong experience in designing, developing, maintaining and optimizing secure and scalable multi-tier web applications with LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP) • Strong knowledge of stored procedures, triggers, indexes, table normalization and database design • Expert understanding of Web Standards, specifically XHTML, CSS, JavaScript, XML, Application Security
LAMP Developer	• Strong experience in designing, developing, maintaining and optimizing secure and scalable multi-tier web applications with LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP) • Strong knowledge of stored procedures, triggers, indexes, table normalization and database design • Experience with both object oriented and procedural programming methodologies and languages (C, C++, Java, Python) • Knowledge of AJAX development
LAMP Administrator	• Strong experience with installing, configuring and maintaining Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP packages. • Strong experience with MySQL installation, administration, replication, backup/recovery and tuning • Strong Linus scripting skills to automate routine tasks • Deploy code and database changes to testing and production environments
LAMP Tester	• Strong experience working in a LAMP environment • Experience in automation, black box, and white box testing • Experience with writing test plans and test cases for automated and manual testing • Experience with MYSQL

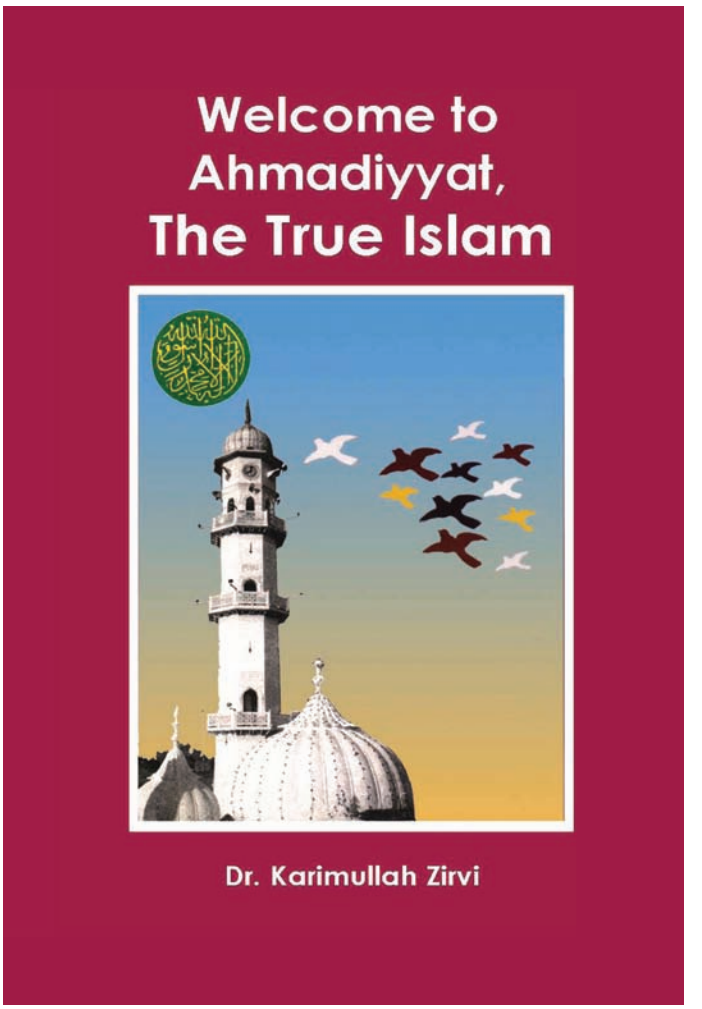
National Lajna Office Certified Teachers			
Name	**Jama'at**	**Name**	**Jama'at**
Bushra Zartasht Malik	Washington, D.C.	Maryam Bhatti	Columbus
Bushra Jamil	Houston South	Nusrat Ahmad	Chicago East
Amtul Ahmad	Silicon Valley	Attia Amjad	Central Jersey
Ikha Siddiqah	Alabama.TN	Nosheen Tehmina	South Virginia
Umerana Malik	Research Triangle	Madiha Malik	Research Triangle
Rehana Mohammad	South Virginia	Aamtul Mateen Ahmad	Philadelphia
Husna Ghani	Austin	Mufleha Ahmad	Potomac
Course Admins for Lajna Teachers			
Name	**Jama'at**	**Name**	**Jama'at**
Madiha Ahmad	Phoenix	Rizwana Malik	Houston North
Saba Khan	Houston North	Asifa Zia	South Virginia

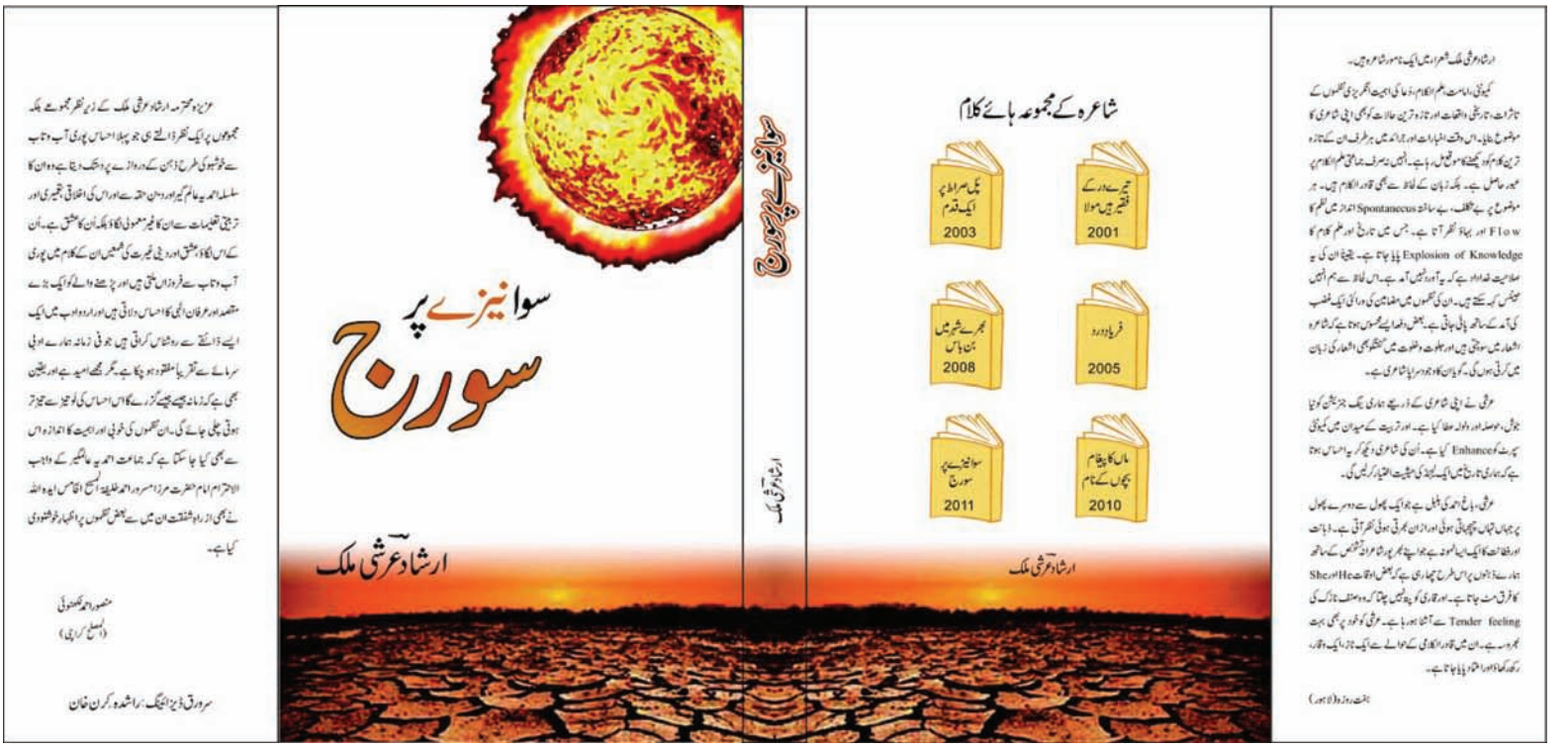
5th Annual National Public Affairs Seminar

Holy Qur'an Exhibition by AMC, New York

Ahmadiyya Muslim Medical Association Retreat







Recently Published Books